

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



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## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, December 11, 1998

**Proclamation 7156—National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1998**

*December 4, 1998*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

Fifty-seven years ago, at 7:55 on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, Imperial Japan launched a surprise attack on American forces at Pearl Harbor, thrusting the United States into the crucible of World War II. From the vantage point of history, we now know that the events of that day would transform our Nation and the course of world history.

Attacking in two waves, Japanese aircraft killed or wounded almost 3,600 Americans—over 1,000 of them aboard the battleship ARIZONA—sank or badly damaged most of our Pacific Fleet, and destroyed or damaged almost all U.S. aircraft in the area. In his historic speech to the Congress on the following day, President Franklin Roosevelt requested and the Congress approved a declaration of war against Japan. With characteristic optimism and confidence in the spirit of the American people, he predicted that “No matter how long it may take us . . . the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.”

President Roosevelt proved to be right, although he would not live to see the ultimate triumph of freedom. After almost 4 long years of struggle and sacrifice by the men and women of our Armed Forces, sustained by the prayers of their families and the efforts of determined working men and women throughout our land who built our Nation into the “Arsenal of Democracy,” the United States and our allies prevailed over the forces of fascism and oppression.

To understand and appreciate the magnitude of our victory in World War II, we have only to remember Pearl Harbor. We

have only to remember the indomitable spirit of the American forces there who, despite the death and destruction engulfing them, individually and collectively responded with courage and selflessness. We remember the sailors who raced to their battle stations and opened fire on the attacking Japanese planes even as their ships were ablaze and sinking. We remember the small, valiant band of Army pilots who managed to take off during the second wave of bombing and, though hopelessly outnumbered, shot down several enemy aircraft. We remember the crew of the crippled OKLAHOMA cheering their comrades on the NEVADA as she made a desperate dash down the harbor channel to safety. These heroes of Pearl Harbor were an inspiration to our entire country—and they remain so today. It is fitting that each year, on this day, we remember them and give thanks for their courage, their sacrifice, and their refusal to be defeated. Because of them, and the millions of other Americans like them who have served our Nation in uniform, America is free, strong, and at peace.

To pay tribute to these heroes and to honor our solemn obligation to those who sacrificed their lives to defend our freedom that fateful Sunday morning, the Congress, by Public Law 103–308, has designated December 7, 1998, as “National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.”

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 1998, as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. I urge all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities in honor of the Americans who served at Pearl Harbor. I also ask all Federal departments and agencies, organizations, and individuals to fly the flag of the United States at half-staff on this day in honor of those Americans who died as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 8, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 9. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **The President's Radio Address**

*December 5, 1998*

Good morning. In 1993 I took office determined to get our country moving again, to provide opportunity for all responsible, hard-working citizens, and to create the conditions of a genuine community in our country.

First, we had to get the economy going. Yesterday we got the good news that unemployment is down to 4.4 percent, the lowest in 28 years, with 17.3 million new jobs. But America needs more than jobs to really work. Our country also has to be safer. And we've worked very hard to make our streets, our schools, our neighborhoods safer places to live, work, and raise families. We've put in place a comprehensive strategy of more prevention, strong enforcement, tougher punishment. We've taken more guns and criminals off the street and put more police on the beat. Crime has dropped for 6 years in a row now, to a 25-year low.

This week America launched a new effort to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and make our streets safer. For the first time ever, the Justice Department, working with the States, conducted computerized background checks on all firearm purchases. In its first 4 days, the new national instant check system reviewed more than 100,000 prospective gun sales to make sure only law-abiding citizens took home new guns. And in just 4 days, we stopped more than 400 felons, fugitives, stalkers, and other prohibited purchasers from walking away with new guns. That's more than 100 illegal gun sales

blocked each day. Who knows how many lives were saved.

But within just 24 hours after the instant checks went into effect, the National Rifle Association went to court to stop the new system. The gun lobby's goal is plain. As the NRA's executive director himself put it this week, they want to "scale back" the Brady law.

Five years ago, as the Brady bill was nearing passage in Congress, the gun lobby spent more than a million dollars in a desperate effort to kill it. Fortunately, the good sense of Congress and the will of the American people prevailed. The gun lobby lost. But the American people won. Unfortunately, as we saw this week, they'll stop at nothing to gut the Brady law and undermine our efforts to keep more guns from falling into the wrong hands, even though we now have 5 years of evidence that it works.

We can't turn back. In these last 5 years, Brady background checks have stopped nearly a quarter of a million illegal handgun sales. We can't go back to the days when dangerous criminals walked away from stores with new guns, no questions asked.

Police, prosecutors, and the American people they protect have made it clear they want to strengthen, not weaken, the Brady law. That's why, when the new Congress goes into session next month, one of my top priorities will be to pass legislation to require a minimum waiting period before a handgun sale becomes final. This "cooling off" period will help prevent rash acts of violence and give authorities more time to stop illegal gun purchases.

I also call on Congress to ban juveniles convicted of violent crimes from owning guns for life. There's no reason why young people convicted of violent crimes should be allowed to buy guns on their 21st birthday. And I want to thank Senator Bob Dole for his recent strong public support of this idea.

Finally, we must make sure that firearms sold at gun shows are not exempt from background checks, that gun shows do not circumvent our gun laws. Last month I asked Treasury Secretary Rubin and Attorney General Reno to find ways to close this loophole.

Reducing crime has been one of the American people's greatest achievements in recent

years. A decade ago no one thought we could do it. But we did. We must not retreat on this hard-won progress. Instead, we must do even more to support the people and the laws that protect our children and families.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:54 p.m. on December 4 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 4 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

**Remarks at the Memorial Service for William Maurice Smith, Jr., in Wynne, Arkansas**  
*December 5, 1998*

Jane, Mark, Murray, Annette, all the members of the family and the friends of Maurice. I stayed up late last night and got up early this morning, and I was trying to think of what I should say. I told Maurice I'd be here, and I figured somebody might ask me to talk. So I thought, well, I ought to start with what he would say to me. Some of it is not repeatable in the church. [Laughter] But it would go something like this: Expletive deleted, don't say too much. [Laughter]

I think all of our lives we will remember a small man with a craggy face, a gravelly voice, a blunt manner, a keen mind, a kind heart, and powerful emotions; a man who was not always good to himself, but was always good to others; a man who could say more with fewer words, or just a grunt, or the tip of that crazy old hat of his than anyone we ever knew.

Now, I collected stories the last 3 or 4 days, and this was the odds-on winner: Bill Clark reminded me that in 1984 we had our first meeting in the Governor's office about the '84 campaign. And we were sitting there, and I began the meeting by saying that I had been so impressed with Hillary's no-smoking policy at the Governor's Mansion I was going to apply it to the Governor's office. Maurice got his hat, put it on, stood up, and started walking. I said, "Where you going?" He said, "Birdeye." [Laughter] I said, "I am applying the no-smoking policy of the Governor's

Mansion to the Governor's office the day after this next election." [Laughter]

He loved to help people. He loved a good fight. But he never sought to destroy his adversary. He loved political campaigns and legislative sessions. He never met a road or a bridge or a levee he didn't like. [Laughter] He loved the Fair Board and the University of Arkansas. He loved the land and the water and the people of this State. Most of all, he loved his family and his friends. He loved us. And how we loved him—often more than I think he knew.

Hillary was home a few weeks ago, and she went by to see Maurice in the hospital. And when she came back to Washington, she looked at me, she said, "I just love that man." And she said, "It seemed to me like everybody else in the hospital did, too."

I tried to call him over Thanksgiving, and then he called me back, and finally, I got him back. We talked twice in the last week. The first time he said, "I wanted to talk to you one more time. I don't think I'm going to get out this time, and I just want you to know I'm proud of everything we did together, and I love you."

Well, all of you know that I owe him a lot. He was the finance chairman of all my campaigns, the master of ceremonies at my inaugurations—ensuring that they would be brief—my chief of staff. He served on the university board; he ran the highway department; and on the side, he always lobbied for Jane's causes for the disabled.

But when I was flying down here on Air Force One today, thinking I wouldn't be on this plane if it weren't for him, I thought of a day 18 years ago, when some of us here were standing on the backyard of the Governor's Mansion after the 1980 elections. And I had just become the youngest former Governor in the history of America—[laughter]—a man with limited future prospects. And that's pretty much the way I felt. And he put his hand on my shoulder, and he looked me in the eye, and he said, "It'll be all right; we'll be back."

I wrote this before I knew the pastor was going to read to us from Luke today. I was thinking of that day today, as we all say farewell to this small man who had such a large impact on all our lives. We say to him, as

he said to me so many years ago, Maurice, it'll be all right; God has promised you mercy because you were merciful to us; kindness because you were kind to us; forgiveness because you forgave us; love because you loved us with all your heart. So, farewell, old friend. I say to you what you said to me so many years ago: It'll be all right; you done good; we'll be together again before you know it.

May God bless his soul.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. at Wynne Presbyterian Church. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Smith's widow, Jane; his son, William Maurice (Mark) Smith III; his daughters, Murray Smith Johnson and Annette Smith Stacy; and William E. Clark, owner, CDI Contractors.

### Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One

December 5, 1998

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

#### Death of Former Senator Albert Gore, Sr.

**The President.** —his father was—for people like me, growing up in our part of the country, Al Gore was the embodiment of the—Albert Gore, Sr., was the embodiment of everything public service ought to be. He was a teacher; he was a progressive; he helped to connect the South with the rest of America; he was progressive on race; he was courageous in standing up for what he believed in—Vietnam. You know, he might have been, himself, in national office if he hadn't been just a little too far ahead of his time.

He was a remarkable, remarkable man, and I'm very grateful that I had the chance to know him and his wife and spend some time with them as a result of our relationship with the Vice President. The country has lost a great patriot, a great public servant, a man who was truly a real role model for young people like me in the South in the 1960's.

**Q.** How far did you go back with him, sir? When did you first meet him?

**The President.** Oh, I don't know that I met him, except maybe to shake hands with him, until 1988. But I knew who he was in 1968—'66, when I was working as a young

student in the Congress. And I knew who he was when I was in high school.

You know, keep in mind he was talked about for national office from the fifties on. He and Estes Kefauver were both prominently mentioned. And Tennessee had these two very progressive, very articulate and very effective voices in the Senate. It was a remarkable partnership. So I always knew who he was, from the time I became at all politically aware.

**Q.** How did people like Senator Gore, Sr., influence up-and-coming young Southern politicians like yourself?

**The President.** Well, first of all, they were progressive, and they cut against the grain and the image that the South had in the fifties and sixties of being, you know, anti-civil rights, discriminatory, undereducated, underdeveloped. He was progressive on education, progressive on civil rights, and sponsored the interstate highway bill. He wanted to connect the South to the rest of America, educate the children of the South, stand up for civil rights. He was a remarkable man. And he was brilliant, full of energy.

And the amazing thing was what a life he had after he left the Senate. When his son and I ran in 1992, he and Pauline—Mrs. Gore—they went all over the country, and he'd give these stemwinding stump speeches, you know. I remember once, in 1988, I spoke at the Oklahoma Democratic dinner, and he came to speak for his son. There were seven speakers that night. He gave by far the best speech, including mine. And everybody would have said that. So he was alert and active and contributing and remarkably free of bitterness or rancor even after he left the Senate and his elected life was terminated.

But his greatest impact may have been the inspiration that he provided to countless young people from the time he became a prominent figure in Tennessee.

**Q.** Did you speak to the Vice President tonight? How is he doing?

**The President.** I just found out a few minutes ago, so I'm going to go call him now.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:55 p.m. en route to Washington, DC. These remarks follow the text as released by the Office of the Press Secretary. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception

December 6, 1998

Thank you very much. The next time there will be three, and then four. *[Laughter]*

Hillary and I are honored to have you back again for another Kennedy Center honors. You know, the conviction that our land of liberty should also be a home for creativity in the performing arts goes all the way back to the very first President ever to live in this great house, John Adams. He wished for an America where, and I quote, "pomp and parade, shows and illuminations flourish from one end of this continent to another." Today, the illumination of our performing arts shines not only across the continent but, indeed, across the world as a life force of our free society.

Dostoyevski defined the mission of artists as "incessantly and eternally to make new roads, wherever they may lead." All the artists we honor tonight have traveled lifetimes across our stages, each in their own way, making those new roads. Their gifts of talent, heart, and spirit are joyous, indelible threads in the fabric of our national life. It is my honor to introduce them.

The Tonight Show has seen a lot of comedians come and go, but one night in 1963, a young man by the name of Bill Cosby took the stage and took the Nation by storm. His hilariously deadpan descriptions of Noah loading the ark with animals—*[Laughter]*—I still remember it, too; it was pretty funny—launched his career. But it was his deeply personal, universally funny caricatures of his childhood friends—like Fat Albert and Weird Harold—that made him famous. One critic wrote, "No comic ever entered a child's mind with so much empathy and gusto."

Bill Cosby's remarkable gift is to be able to look inside the human experience and all its depth and diversity and hold it up to the universal light of laughter, and in so doing, to allow all of us to return to our child's mind. For more than 30 years, he has made the ordinary business of life extraordinarily funny business—in best selling books like "Fatherhood" and "Time Flies," blockbuster movies like "Uptown Saturday Night," eight gold records, and, of course, there were some

minor successes in television along the way—*[laughter]*—"I Spy," "The Cosby Show," his new hit series.

Bill once said he wanted to make jokes about people's similarities, about what's universal in their experience and, in so doing, to bring us closer together. That is exactly what he has done. We thank him for the lessons and the laughter.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Bill Cosby. *[Applause]*

The curtain parted, the painted face popped out, and "Cabaret" forever changed the musical theater. John Kander and Fred Ebb have given us dark and gleaming shows suffused with metallic melodies. Their musical left the happy days for the harder passages of our century—Germany at the decadent edge of the Nazi nightmare, a desperate dance marathon in the Depression era of Atlantic City, a jazz-age murder in Chicago, a jail cell in revolutionary South America. The New York Times wrote that they shook the ground under our feet—and they certainly set them tapping.

With "Cabaret," "Chicago," "Steel Pier," and "Kiss of the Spider Woman," Kander and Ebb took us a long way from "Oklahoma" and "South Pacific." It has been a relentlessly syncopated journey, with lyrical wit, musical drama, bold and lovely songs that infiltrate our minds and never leave. One of those songs, known to every American, has become the anthem of "New York, New York." *[Laughter]* After all, what good is sitting alone in a room when you can go out and see hit revivals of "Chicago" and "Cabaret"?

Fred Kander and John Ebb have entertained us, challenged us, and touched our consciences. Tonight we salute them for all the daring, all the shows, all the razzle dazzle.

Ladies and gentlemen, John Kander and Fred Ebb. *[Applause]*

Willie Nelson's music has been a part of my life—like everybody from my part of the country—for a very long time now. After years of campaigning, we can always identify, Hillary and I, with what it's like to be "On the Road Again." *[Laughter]*

Willie Nelson is like America—always in the process of becoming. He changed all the rules about what country music was supposed to be. The granite-faced, long-haired man of

the soil put down roots in folk, swing, pop, and rock and roll. And everywhere he went, he gave us something new. His songs are rugged and beautiful, raw and lilting; they're an individual, stubborn declaration of pride and hope amid a world of troubles. They're as restless as he is.

The American highway has been Willie Nelson's second home. In fact, I think that bus of his has gone more miles than Air Force One. *[Laughter]* When someone once asked him why he went into music, he replied, "I thought I could sing pretty good." Well, 200 albums and 5 Grammy Awards later, we know he was right.

A few years ago, the Texas Legislature declared July the 4th to be Willie Nelson Day. Let me say that tonight is Willie Nelson's night all across America.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Willie Nelson. *[Applause]*

Anyone who went to the movies in the 1950's knew the music of Andre Previn before they knew his name. From "Kismet" to "My Fair Lady," and 50 other films, his scores and orchestrations were the sounds of the silver screen, winning fans and Oscars.

For some musicians, this achievement might have been more than enough. But Andre Previn's hunger for great music could not be contained. The arc of his music is long, and he has soared across it. He has been called the greatest crossover artist since George Gershwin and, over the course of 50 years, quite literally, he has done it all.

As a jazz musician, he has jammed with the best, from Charlie Parker to Ella Fitzgerald. As a conductor, his repertoire ranges from Bach to Stravinsky to Frank Zappa. As a composer, he has blazed a new trail in contemporary music. His new opera, "A Streetcar Named Desire," which opened in San Francisco, is simply the latest challenge in a fearless career.

Andre Previn was 9 years old when his family left Germany to find refuge here in America. Maestro Previn, I'm here to thank you for giving so much to those of us in your adopted country.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Andre Previn. *[Applause]*

I'm happy to welcome Shirley Temple Black back to the White House. But I'm not

the first President to do it. She was 7 years old when President Roosevelt asked to meet her, to thank her for the smiling face that helped America through the Great Depression.

The price of movie tickets has gone up a little since then—*[laughter]*—but her smile hasn't changed, and Shirley Temple continues to be a household word for generations who weren't even born when she left the silver screen behind.

Let's face it. All little children are adorable, but how many can dance, sing, and act? She was the first child actor ever to carry a full-length A-list picture. She was the most sought-after star in Hollywood. Once, the New York Times hailed her as "the greatest trouper of all—greater than Garbo, Hepburn, and Ginger Rogers."

Shirley Temple had the greatest short career in movie history—*[laughter]*—and then gracefully retired to, as we all know, the far less strenuous life of public service. *[Laughter]* She did a masterful job as Ambassador, from Ghana to Czechoslovakia, where she made common cause with Václav Havel in the final, decisive days of the cold war. In fact, she has to be the only person who both saved an entire movie studio from failure and contributed to the fall of communism. *[Laughter]* From her childhood to the present day, Shirley has always been an ambassador for what is best about America.

Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Shirley Temple Black. *[Applause]*

Ladies and gentlemen, I just told Shirley's husband of 48 years, Charles, that I was watching one of her movies the other day, about the Civil War, and he said, "Yes, that's the one where she met President Lincoln." And she told me, "I didn't just meet President Roosevelt; I sat on Abraham Lincoln's lap." *[Laughter]*

Ladies and gentlemen, this has been a wonderful night. I know we look forward to the honors. I thank you all for being here. And once again, let me thank our honorees for the great gifts they have given us. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript



made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Hillary Clinton.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders on Major Illicit Drug-Producing and Drug-Transit Countries**

*December 4, 1998*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

In accordance with the provisions of section 490(h) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, I have determined that the following countries are major illicit drug-producing or drug-transit countries: Afghanistan, Aruba, The Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Burman, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

This year I have removed Iran and Malaysia from the list of major drug producing countries and designated them as countries of concern.

*Iran.* On the list as a major drug producer since 1987, Iran has been a traditional opium producing country, with illicit poppy cultivation well beyond the statutory threshold limit of 1,000 hectares. A United States Government review in 1993 determined that there were at least 3,500 hectares of illicit opium poppy until cultivation in the country.

Over the past few years, the Government of Iran has reported success in eradicating illicit opium poppy cultivation. We were unable to test these claims until this year, when a United States Government review found no evidence of any significant poppy cultivation in the traditional growing areas. While we cannot rule out some cultivation in remote parts of the country, it is unlikely that there would be enough to meet the threshold definition of a major drug producing country.

Although important quantities of opiates continue to transit Iran en route to Europe, the United States Government currently has no evidence to support a judgment that significant quantities of these drugs are headed to the United States. Therefore, Iran is not a major drug-transit country under section 481(e)(5) of the Foreign Assistance Act.

*Malaysia.* Although Malaysia's geographic location makes it a feasible transit route for heroin to the United States, as had been the case in the past, we have no indication that drugs significantly affecting the United States have transited the country in the past few years.

I have further determined that the following countries or regions are of concern for the purpose of U.S. counternarcotics efforts:

*Netherlands Antilles.* Though there is continuing drug activity taking place around the Netherlands Antilles, especially in the vicinity of St. Maarten, we have only anecdotal information that significant quantities of drugs bound for the United States are involved.

*Turkey and Other Balkan Route Countries.* I continue to be concerned about the large volume of Southwest Asian heroin moving through Turkey and neighboring countries (including Bulgaria, Greece, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Croatia, and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia) to Western Europe along the Balkan Route. There is no clear evidence, however, that this heroin significantly affects the United States—as required for a country to be designated a major transit country.

*Syria and Lebanon.* I removed Syria and Lebanon from the list of major drug producers last year after the United States Government determined that there was no significant opium poppy cultivation in Lebanon's Bika' Valley. A review again this year confirmed that there is still no evidence of significant replanting of opium poppy and no evidence that drugs transiting these countries significantly affect the United States. The relevant agencies continue, however, to monitor the situation.

*Cuba.* Cuba's geographical position astride one of the principal Caribbean trafficking routes to the United States makes the country a logical candidate for consideration for the majors list. Interdiction operations elsewhere in the region are driving drug smugglers increasingly to fly over Cuba to drop cocaine into Cuban and Bahamian waters. This trend makes it important for Cuba to take effective measures to stem the flow and to cooperate with others in doing so.

*Major Cannabis Producers.* While Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, the Philippines, and South Africa are important cannabis producers, they do not appear on this list because I have determined, pursuant to section 481(e)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act, that in all cases the illicit cannabis is either consumed locally or exported to countries other than the United States, and thus such illicit cannabis production does not significantly affect the United States.

*Central Asia.* United States Government agencies this year again conducted reviews of potential cultivation sites in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, traditional opium poppy growing areas of the former Soviet Union. These reviews indicated no evidence of significant opium poppy cultivation.

Finally, I would note that geography makes Central America a logical conduit and transshipment area for South American drugs bound for Mexico and the United States, and that there has been evidence of increased trafficking activity in this region over the past year. Its location between Colombia and Mexico, combined with thousands of miles of coastline, the availability of a number of container-handling ports in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras, the presence of the Pan-American Highway, and limited law enforcement capability, have made the isthmus attractive to the drug trade. Hurricane Mitch has disrupted traffic flow through the region, but over the longer term resumption or even an increase in trafficking activity remains possible.

Consequently, I am concerned about drug trafficking through Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The appropriate agencies will continue to compile data on drug flows and their effect on the United States in order to determine whether any are major drug-transit countries. At the same time, I expressly reiterate my commitment to support the efforts of these governments to recover from the ravages of Hurricane Mitch, and to ensure that drug traffickers do not take advantage of this tragedy to make inroads into the region.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Bob Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7.

## **Remarks on Efforts To Combat Medicare Fraud**

*December 7, 1998*

Thank you. I would like to welcome you all here today and thank Margaret Dixon for those fine remarks. I thank Deborah Briceland-Betts for representing the Older Women's League so well, and Nancy-Ann Min DeParle for the great job she does as our HCFA Administrator. I welcome our friend George Kourpias and representatives from the National Council of Senior Citizens.

And I want to say a special word of appreciation to Senator Tom Harkin, who has been on top of this issue for a very, very long time, and has long needed more support from administrations. And we certainly tried to give him ours, but he has been a real trailblazer, and we thank him.

I'd like to also thank, as others have, the HHS and especially June Gibbs Brown, the Inspector General, and Mike Mangano, the Deputy Inspector General, who is here today.

I'd also like to say one other word about Senator Gore, Sr., who was mentioned by Nancy-Ann. Al Gore, Sr., was a leader in the development and the passage of the original Medicare bill over 30 years ago. And that is one of the many, many things we remember him for at this time of his passing.

For more than 30 years now, Medicare has been more than a Government program. It has been a way that we could honor our obligations to our parents and our grandparents, an expression of the old profound American belief that the bonds of mutual love and support among the generations must remain strong. Any threat, therefore, to the integrity

of Medicare is a threat to these bonds. And that is one of the main reasons that our administration has worked so hard to strengthen Medicare.

The balanced budget bill I signed last year extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund for a decade. We also established a commission currently working to help Medicare meet the needs of the baby boom generation and the rising costs that inevitably come as we all live longer and longer and require more health care.

It is a troubling financial problem, but as a social matter it is a happy challenge. It is what I would call a high-class problem that we are all living longer and longer. But it does present us with certain real challenges which we have to face, and I look forward to getting the report from Senator Breaux and the Medicare Commission, and to working on a bipartisan basis with the next Congress to resolve this important matter.

Today I'm announcing additional steps to strengthen Medicare by fighting the threat of Medicare fraud. Every year, Medicare is cheated out of billions of dollars, money that translates into higher taxes on working Americans, higher copayments in premiums for elderly Medicare recipients. This has become, as I said, especially significant as we grow older and more and more of us become eligible for Medicare.

I'm proud of what we have already done to fight fraud and abuse and waste. Since 1993 we've assigned more Federal prosecutors and FBI agents to fight health care fraud. We've increased prosecutions by over 60 percent, convictions by 240 percent, saved \$20 billion in health care claims. Money that would have lined the pockets of scam artists now is helping to preserve the Medicare Trust Fund and to provide high-quality, affordable health care.

But there is still more we can do. The private sector health care contractors that are responsible for fighting waste, fraud, and abuse too often are not living up to their responsibilities. We recently learned that one-fourth of those contractors have never reported a single case of fraud, even though the Inspector General is quite certain that fraud is pervasive in this area.

Therefore, we are using new authority we fought for to create new weapons in the fight against fraud. Beginning this spring we will empower new, specialized contractors, Medicare fraud hunters, who will focus on waste, fraud, and abuse. These new fraud hunters, by tracking down scams and waste, can bring real savings to Medicare and strengthen the system for the 21st century.

I'm also requiring all Medicare contractors to notify the Government immediately when they learn of any evidence of fraud, so that we can detect patterns of fraud quickly and take swift action to stop them. And I'm asking HCFA to report back to me early next year with a comprehensive plan to fight waste, fraud, and abuse further in the Medicare program.

In the fight against Medicare fraud, Congress must also do its part. And I am encouraged by the bipartisan oversight hearings being held in Chicago this week by Senators Collins and Durbin. When it returns next year, I'll ask Congress to pass legislation that can save Medicare another \$2 billion over the next 5 years: First, legislation that will allow us to empower our new fraud hunters to spot overpayments and keep crooked medical service providers from getting into the Medicare system to start with.

Second, the legislation will allow Medicare to pay much lower rates for prescription medications. Under current law, Medicare loses hundreds of millions of dollars each year by paying as much as 10 times more than the private sector does for certain drugs. It's just wrong.

Third, the legislation will force private insurers to pay claims that they are legally responsible for, so that Medicare does not get stuck with the bill. This happens more often than you would think.

Fourth, legislation will allow us to crack down on medical providers, particularly those claiming to deliver mental health care, who bill for services they never, in fact, provide, a large and unfortunately, growing problem, according to our recent reports.

By passing these commonsense measures to fight Medicare waste and fraud, Congress can do more than help save taxpayers' money. It can demonstrate a bipartisan desire to preserve and strengthen Medicare for

the future. If we take these actions now, we can help to assure that the system that has served our parents and grandparents so well will be there to serve our children and grandchildren well into the 21st century.

Thanks to the advocates who are here—Senator Harkin and others—I'm confident that is exactly what we will do next year.

Thank you very much, and happy holidays.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Margaret Dixon, immediate past president, American Association of Retired Persons; Deborah Briceland-Betts, executive director, Older Women's League; and George J. Kourpias, president, National Council of Senior Citizens.

### **Statement on International Maritime Organization Action To Protect the Northern Right Whale**

*December 7, 1998*

Today's vote by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to strengthen protections for the northern right whale is a vital step to ensure the survival of these majestic but endangered creatures.

Like many other marine mammals, the northern right whale once was hunted nearly to extinction. The 300 or so that survive spend much of the year in waters off Cape Cod and off the Georgia and Florida coasts. Biologists believe the greatest human threat they face today is collisions with large ships.

In April I instructed our representatives to the IMO to seek strong measures to address this threat. Under our proposal, approved unanimously today by the IMO, commercial ships entering the whale's calving and feeding grounds will be required to report by radio to the U.S. Coast Guard, which will relay back the latest information on the whales' locations and advice on avoiding collisions.

Today's action by the IMO demonstrates once again that through international cooperation we can restore and protect our precious oceans and the magnificent diversity of life they sustain.

### **Proclamation 7157—Death of Albert Gore, Sr.**

*December 7, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Albert Gore, Sr., was the embodiment of everything public service ought to be. The Nation has lost a great patriot and a true role model for young people everywhere.

As a mark of respect for the memory of Albert Gore, Sr., former Senator from the State of Tennessee, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions on Tuesday, December 8, 1998. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff on that day at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:54 a.m., December 8, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 9.

### **Executive Order 13106—Adjustments of Certain Rates of Pay and Delegation of a Federal Pay Administration Authority**

*December 7, 1998*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the

United States of America, including the laws cited herein, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Statutory Pay Systems.** The rates of basic pay or salaries of the statutory pay systems (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 5302(1)), as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5303(a), in accordance with section 647(a) of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 1999, as incorporated in Division A, section 101(h) of Public Law 105-277, are set forth on the schedules attached hereto and made a part hereof:

(a) The General Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5332(a)) at Schedule 1;

(b) The Foreign Service Schedule (22 U.S.C. 3963) at Schedule 2; and

(c) The schedules for the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs (38 U.S.C. 7306, 7404; section 301(a) of Public Law 102-40) at Schedule 3.

**Sec. 2. Senior Executive Service.** The rates of basic pay for senior executives in the Senior Executive Service, as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5382, are set forth on Schedule 4 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

**Sec. 3. Executive Salaries.** The rates of basic pay or salaries for the following offices and positions, which remain unchanged pursuant to section 621 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 1999, as incorporated in Division A, section 101(h) of Public Law 105-277, are set forth on the schedules attached hereto and made a part hereof:

(a) The Executive Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5312-5318) at Schedule 5;

(b) The Vice President (3 U.S.C. 104) and the Congress (2 U.S.C. 31) at Schedule 6; and

(c) Justices and judges (28 U.S.C. 5, 44(d), 135, 252, and 461(a)) at Schedule 7.

**Sec. 4. Uniformed Services.** Pursuant to sections 601 and 604 of Public Law 105-85, the rates of monthly basic pay (37 U.S.C. 203(a)) for members of the uniformed services and the rate of monthly cadet or midshipman pay (37 U.S.C. 203(c)) are set forth on Schedule 8 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

**Sec. 5. Locality-Based Comparability Payments.** (a) Pursuant to section 5304 of title 5, United States Code, and in accordance

with section 647(a) of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 1999, as incorporated in Division A, section 101(h) of Public Law 105-277, locality-based comparability payments shall be paid in accordance with Schedule 9 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

(b) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall take such actions as may be necessary to implement these payments and to publish appropriate notice of such payments in the *Federal Register*.

**Sec. 6. Effective Dates.** Schedule 8 is effective on January 1, 1999. The other schedules contained herein are effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 1999.

**Sec. 7. Prior Order Superseded.** Executive Order 13071 of December 29, 1997, is superseded.

**Sec. 8. Delegation of a Federal Pay Administration Authority.** Executive Order 12748, as amended, is further amended in section 2(c) by deleting "5304(h)" and inserting "5304(g)-(h)" in lieu thereof.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
December 7, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:54 a.m., December 8, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order and the attached annexes were published in the *Federal Register* on December 8.

## Remarks to the White House Conference on Social Security December 8, 1998

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by welcoming all of you and acknowledging Senators Daschle and Santorum, Congressman Gephardt and Congressman Shaw, who will speak, and the very, very large delegation we have from the United States Congress, Members of both parties right out here to my left. I thank you all for coming.

I think the fact that we have such a large representation from the Congress, as well as leaders of various organizations of people throughout the United States and people

concerned about the Social Security issue, is a testament to the profound importance of this issue and the commitment of the American people to do something about it.

I thank Secretary Rubin, Secretary Herman, Secretary Daley, and Gene Sperling, Jack Lew, Ken Apfel, and John Podesta, representing the administration, for their presence here.

This is the first-ever White House Conference on Social Security. There are all of you here in Washington, plus thousands of people watching at 60 satellite sites in all 50 States.

I'd also like to apologize for my early departure. I had hoped to be here for as much of this conference as I could, but, as all of you know, there is a service in Tennessee today for the father of our Vice President, former United States Senator Albert Gore, Sr., who was a true, great public servant. He and his generation built the entire postwar order from Medicare to the interstate highway system, both of which he himself had a personal role in creating. They were civic institutions that have helped save our Nation and our world in the half-century since.

Now it is our turn to be builders, to renew the institutions that have made America strong. In this time, America faces no more important challenge than the need to save Social Security for the 21st century. Social Security is and must remain a rock-solid guarantee. It is a sacred trust among the generations, between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren; between those in retirement and those at work, between the able-bodied and the disabled. It embodies our obligations to one another and our deepest values as Americans.

This year, I and a lot of people in this room, a lot of Members of the Congress, have spent a lot of time listening to the American people and speaking with them about Social Security. This White House conference, a gathering of lawmakers, experts, Americans from all walks of life, marks an important step in the direction of saving Social Security for the 21st century.

We'll hear a lot of ideas expressed about what course we should take. Let me shock you by saying I think there will be some differences of opinion expressed in this room.

But we should begin this process on common ground, agreeing above all on the importance of acting and acting now, while we can, during prosperous and productive times that Americans have worked so hard to achieve.

Our economy is indeed a powerful engine of prosperity. In its wide wake, it creates something every bit as important as jobs and growth: The opportunity to do something meaningful for America's future and the confidence that we can actually do it, an opportunity to save Social Security for the 21st century. I hope history will record that we seized this opportunity.

Earlier this year I said we should reserve any surplus until we save Social Security first. We have done so. We should take the next step and act now. It is more than an opportunity; it is a solemn responsibility—to take the achievement of past generations, the Americans who, according to President Roosevelt, had a rendezvous with destiny, and to renew the social contract for a new era.

Through war and peace, from recession to expansion, our Nation has fulfilled its obligation to older Americans. It is hard, thankfully, to remember the time when growing old often meant growing poor. It seems impossible to believe, but in many cases, retirement meant being relegated to a rest home and the degradation of dependence. The normal aches and pains of aging were accompanied by the unbearable pain of becoming a burden to one's children.

That's why Social Security continues to offer much hope, much confidence, much peace of mind. It is one of the most important and ambitious undertakings in our Nation's entire lifetime.

President Roosevelt said there is no tragedy in growing old, but there is tragedy in growing old without means of support. Soon we will face a rising challenge in providing that support, as every one of you knows. Before too long, there will only be about two people working for every one person eligible to draw Social Security. As our panelists will discuss, we are actually going to have many, many older Americans.

Just last night Hillary and I were discussing a recent health report that infant mortality last year dropped to an all-time low, and the life expectancy of Americans rose to an all-

time high, over 76 years. Some would argue that this problem we have with Social Security is, therefore, a high-class problem. I know that the older I get, the more high-class the problem looks to me.

It is, nonetheless, a significant challenge: 75 million baby boomers retiring during the next two decades. By 2013, what Social Security takes in will no longer be enough to fund what it pays out. That's just 15 years away. Then we'll have to use the proceeds from the Trust Fund. By 2032, just 34 years away, the money Social Security takes in will only be enough to pay 72 percent of benefits.

Now, there are many ways to deal with this, but there is only one way to get it done. Let me say to all the people on all sides of this debate, the only way we can save Social Security and avoid what I think is a result that none of us want, which is either a dramatic cut in the standard of living of retirees in America, a dramatic increase in the taxes on working Americans and the lowering of the standard of living of the children and grandchildren of the baby boomers—the only way we can avoid that is by working together, putting progress ahead of partisanship, placing the long-term interest of the Nation first.

Already, some are predicting that we are simply incapable of doing this in Washington. I am determined to prove them wrong. I hope everyone of you are determined to do so as well.

What does this mean? It means, first of all, not that we should forget about what we think is right. It means each of us should articulate what we think is right, and those who believe they disagree should listen to them. We should all listen to people who have different opinions; they might be right, and we might be wrong.

Secondly, it means that our differences cannot take the form of personal attacks. This is a complex issue, and I have found that on this issue most people believe what they really believe—we do not need to let our differences disintegrate into personal attacks.

Third, in the end, all of us in some sense will have to sacrifice our sense of the perfect to work together for the common good. There is in this process no room for rancor. The stakes are too high; the issues far too

important. It's not about politics; it's about doing right by young Americans and older Americans and the future of America.

The whole point of this conference is to open honest debate and to build consensus, not to shoot down ideas or insist that one side or the other has to go first. Secretary Riley, our Secretary of Education, said that one of his greatest lessons from South Carolina politics was the old saying that I'm for change, and you are, too; you go first. *[Laughter]*

I'm prepared to do whatever it takes to move us forward, but let's agree we have to march together. That's the only path to the finish line. Our ears, our minds must remain open to any good idea and to any person of good will.

In judging any proposal, I believe we should be guided by five principles. First, as I have said, we must strengthen and protect the guarantee of Social Security for the 21st century. Second, we must maintain universality and fairness. Later, panelists will discuss the impact of reform on different groups. The First Lady was scheduled to discuss the special impact on women, who on average live longer than men, so depend on Social Security more.

Now, keep in mind that only 4.6 percent of elderly married women are living in poverty. For elderly single women, the number is about 20 percent. Those who think we can wait should never forget that fact either. When we judge our plan to save Social Security, we need to ask whether it cuts the poverty rate among single elderly women and other groups in our population that are still at significant risk.

I must say, I have been quite impressed that proposals that span the conventional ideological spectrum have shown a sensitivity to this and to taking vulnerable people out of poverty and giving them the secure retirement they deserve.

Third, I believe we must construct a system where Social Security can be counted on regardless of the ups and downs of the economy or the markets.

Fourth, Social Security must continue to provide financial security for disabled and low income beneficiaries. One in three Social

Security beneficiaries are not retirees, and we must never forget that.

And fifth, any proposal must maintain our hard-won fiscal discipline. It has helped to fuel the prosperity Americans enjoy today. That is, after all, what gives us the chance to do this in at least a less painful manner.

I look forward to transforming these ideas into action. Let us begin firm in our faith that Social Security can bind our people not only across generational divides but across party lines.

Let me say, too, in that regard, I am grateful for the presence here of Senator Santorum and Congressman Shaw from the Republican majority, and the minority leaders, Senator Daschle, and Congressman Gephardt. I thank you very much for your presence here. And now I'd like to turn it over to them to make some opening remarks so we can get on with the work of this conference.

Let me say this before I sit down. You have to decide that we are going to do this. You have to tell these Members of Congress that you will support them if they act. If you come here representing a particular point of view and you know these Members of Congress agree with you, you should ask them to defend your point of view, but to be willing in the end to make a decision that will deal with the problem. This will only get harder, every single year we avoid resolving this, it will get harder and harder and harder. And everybody's favorite idea will have a less beneficial impact the longer we wait. Now is the time to do this.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 a.m. in the Cotillion Ballroom at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel.

## **Memorandum on Assistance for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union**

*December 8, 1998*

Presidential Determination No. 99-8

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Assistance Program for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union

Pursuant to Section 517(b) in Title V of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-277), I hereby determine that it is in the national security interest of the United States to make available funds appropriated under the heading "Assistance for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union" in Title II of that Act without regard to the restriction in that section.

You are authorized and directed to notify the Congress of this determination and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

## **Remarks at a Gala Honoring Dale and Betty Bumpers**

*December 8, 1998*

Ladies and gentlemen, Hillary began by saying this was a bittersweet moment for us, and indeed, it is. Nonetheless, I do want to thank all of you for making it possible. I thank Joan Baker, Deba Leach, and all the Peace Link folks. I thank our good friend Reverend Wogaman for praying over us. God knows we need it. I thank my friend Peter Duchin for being here and for playing.

And I thank Alan Simpson for destroying all the stereotypes that we Democrats like to have about Republicans. [Laughter] He's tall and funny. [Laughter] And you know, in his new career, he has finally destroyed the myth that Harvard is an elitist institution.



[*Laughter*] And maybe even that it's an elite institution. [*Laughter*]

I thank Ann Bingaman for her wonderful remarks, and all the Members of the Senate, the diplomatic corps, and others who are here tonight; and our wonderful friends David and Barbara Pryor for being here.

You know, the six of us—we three couples—we've been together a long time. I met David Pryor when he was running for Congress in 1976. I voted for Dale Bumpers when he ran for Governor the first time, in 1970. We were all on the ballot in 1974, and I was the only one that lost. [*Laughter*] And—it's a good thing, I could have—if I had won, I'd have gone to Congress, been infected by people like Simpson, and never become President. [*Laughter*]

But over these last more than 20 years now, we've been together on countless occasions. When we were all in public office—when I was Governor and they were our Senators, we did all those parades that David talked about. We did countless toasts and roasts. We even crashed in a plane together once, nearly made every other politician in Arkansas ecstatic all at one time—we opened all the jobs at once. [*Laughter*] But we walked away from it.

We've borrowed each other's stories mercilessly. Then I became President, and they said it wasn't Presidential for me to tell jokes, so I had to stop. I wish I had a nickel for every time Dale Bumpers has called me and said, "Now, tell me that joke one more time." [*Laughter*] And I'd get halfway through the joke, and he'd remember it and remember the punchline and start laughing. I could just hear the tears rolling down his cheeks, he'd laugh so much.

This would be a better place if we had more people who laugh like that. This would be a stronger National Capital if we had more people like Alan Simpson and Dale Bumpers and David Pryor that could tell these stories and reach across party lines.

You know, Betty and Dale were raised in a tradition in Arkansas—a little town in western Arkansas where, if you took yourself too seriously, you were deflated quickly. And people knew about you, all about you. And they loved you anyway. It's easy to get away from that, the more distance you get from

real life and this business. So I have to tell you that one of the things that I am most grateful to both of them for is remaining real people in every way, throughout all these years—the laughter, the tears, the drama, the struggles; real flesh and blood, patriotic, wonderful human beings. It means a lot and more every passing day.

I thank Betty for her vision. We've made a lot of fun of all the things she's done with Peace Links, but if you think about it, it's a truly astonishing thing. It proves, really, that there is such a thing as citizen empowerment. And one person with vision and enough people, like Ann, ready to be dragooned into service, can change the course of history.

Think about what we're discussing today. Today, we're impatient because the Russians haven't ratified the START II treaty, so we can negotiate another treaty, so we can dramatically slash our nuclear arsenals further. And when we do, it still won't be enough to suit Betty, but it will be partly because she has been pushing us all this time, and all the other Peace Links members.

I want to thank Betty for something else, too, that she and Dale pioneered this whole business of immunizing our children. Last night we had a Christmas party at the White House, Betty, and I thought about you, because a young, handsome man came through the line and shook hands with Hillary and me, and he said—he looked at us, and he said, "I want you to know, for the last 3 years, I have run your immunization program. And it's been the proudest experience of my life." He said, "We've gotten tens of thousands of volunteers all across America and for the first time in our history, we've got over 90 percent of our children immunized, and all these kids are going to live that would not have lived—they'll be normal, that would not have had normal lives before. And you were the first person that sensitized me to that issue. And I thank you for that, and I hope you're proud of that achievement for your country."

I want to say just a word about Dale. I have to forgive him, for one thing—I'm in this sort of forgiveness mode. [*Laughter*] Dale Bumpers never fails to introduce me

and David Pryor as the second-best Governors Arkansas ever had. [*Laughter*] And I forgive him because it's probably true.

He was an inspiration to David and me, as David said. And as I look back on his long public career, including his service as Governor and the 9,447 votes he cast in the United States Senate, votes for energy conservation, votes to preserve the ozone layer—people used to make fun of Dale Bumpers about the ozone layer, the way they used to make fun of Betty about Peace Links. Two days ago I got a report on the hole in the ozone over the South Pole; it's the biggest it has ever been, and its duration is longer than any we've ever measured. And we have at least made some progress on it because he started griping about it so long ago.

He stood up for reform of our laws on natural resources, and he got some things done, and we didn't get everything we wanted to do done because there were too many people like Simpson stopping us, but—[*laughter*]—eventually we'll get it done.

He stood up for the Constitution of the United States, for the welfare of our children, for the future of America. In his own way, just as Betty did in Peace Links, he was always trying to build bridges to tomorrow over the fears and ignorance and conflicts of today, always trying to bring out the best.

And I was sitting here looking at David and Barbara and Betty and Dale, and I was thinking, it does not take long to live a life. Time passes quickly. And all we can do is make the most of every day God gives us. I think that my days have been richer, and I know that Hillary's have, and I believe our public service has been better because very early on we met, came to know, love, admire, and learn from Dale and Betty Bumpers. We will love them always.

On Dale Bumpers' last official visit to the White House, not very long ago, a couple of weeks ago, we had this huge gathering under a tent of every soul we could find in Washington connected to Arkansas. And I signed legislation making Little Rock Central High School an historic site, a companion to a bill that will award Congressional Gold Medals to all the Little Rock Nine who integrated that high school so long ago, a real

milestone on America's long march towards justice and equality and reconciliation.

At this time, when the world needs so much from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to the Balkans to central Africa to our own meanest streets, a remembrance of what is basic and good and fundamental about our national life, when we need so badly to be reconciled one to another and to reach out to those around the world, the enduring legacy of Betty Bumpers and Peace Links, and Dale Bumpers' entire career as a public official, to me was somehow crystallized on that magic day when we celebrated a seminal event in all of our lives, and his commemorating it for all time to come.

We will remember them for all of our days with gratitude, thanks, and laughter. God bless you both, and congratulations on your award.

Please come on up.

This magnificent and beautiful award is richly deserved. It's also very heavy. [*Laughter*] But, what the heck. If John Glenn can go into space, they can hold this award.

God bless you. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:36 p.m. in the ballroom at the Capitol Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Joan Baker, chair, and Elisabeth (Deba) Leach, vice chair, Peace Links; Rev. J. Phillip Wogaman, who delivered the invocation; Peter Duchin, orchestra leader; Ann Bingaman, national link and wife of Senator Jeff Bingaman; former Senator Alan Simpson, master of ceremonies; and former Senator David Pryor and his wife, Barbara. Peace Links, founded by Mrs. Bumpers in 1982 to help educate women on nuclear arms issues, presented Senator and Mrs. Bumpers with the "Eleanor Roosevelt Living World Award" at the 12th annual "Peace on Earth" gala for their combined years of public service.

### **Remarks on Receiving the W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award**

*December 8, 1998*

Thank you for the wonderful welcome. My good and longtime friend Paul Kirk, thank you for your wise words and your kindness and for the award. Generally, I don't think Presidents should get awards. But I like this one awful well. [*Laughter*]

I am honored to be here with the NDI. I thank Ken Wollack, Jean Dunn, and all the others here who worked to make your work a success. I thank you for establishing a fellowship in Cecile Ledsky's name. I thank you for honoring our other honorees who richly deserve to be recognized.

I thank the members of our Government who have helped me to become involved in Ireland. I thank the Members of Congress who are here whose support and interest and consistent commitment has been absolutely indispensable for the work that we have done in these last few years.

I thank our Ambassadors—Phil Lader, our Ambassador to Great Britain; and our new Ambassador to Ireland, my longtime friend Governor Mike Sullivan. I welcome him. Jim Lyons, thank you; Brian Atwood; all of our special guests from Northern Ireland and Ireland; my fellow Irish-Americans; and a special thanks to George Mitchell. I thank you all.

Let me also say I'm delighted to have an award named for Averell Harriman. Hillary and I had the great honor and real joy of getting to know Governor Harriman in his later years. We spent the night with him a time or two. We once stayed up half the night listening to him talk to us about how he was Roosevelt's envoy with Churchill and Stalin. It is a pretty hard act to follow.

But I think—I believe Governor Harriman and the men and women of his generation would be proud of America, as it stands on the eve of a new century and a new millennium. We can look ahead to the last year of this, the "American Century," with confidence that we have never been a stronger force for peace and for democracy.

Some of the most entrenched conflicts the world has known have given ground in the last few years to a new spirit of cooperation. Countries dominated for centuries by strife, speaking a new language, talking about a shared future: in the Middle East, where religious hatred seemed as old as the region itself; in the Balkans, where I heard propagandists blame tensions on the battle of Kosovo in 1389; in Peru and Ecuador, where a border war had roots that went back centuries; and, of course, in Northern Ireland, where the Troubles dragged on for nearly

three decades, but the arguments went back for hundreds of years.

Fortunately, the people of Northern Ireland today are looking forward to a shared 21st century in freedom, democracy, and peace. So many people are making progress around the world, but we all know it's hard. It's hard right now in Northern Ireland. It's hard right now in the Middle East. Hillary and I and members of our administration are going to Israel and Gaza at the end of this week to do what we can to keep the process agreed to at Wye on track.

It's hard in Kosovo, where American diplomacy under Dick Holbrooke's leadership and NATO's threat of military force averted a crisis but where we still must have a political settlement and political reform in Serbia to have a lasting peace. It is hard.

One of the things that makes it so hard, and one of the things that makes democracy so essential, is that people have to be both free to be the best they can be, free to live their dreams and lift people according to their aspirations. They have to know that they count just as much as anyone else. But one of the things that makes democracy so essential is they have to know that there is some restraint, on themselves and on others, beyond which they cannot go.

For how many times have I seen, these last 6 years, leaders of opposition factions, in talks or at the edge of conflict, or trying to get out of conflict, desperately, desperately want to reach across the lines that divide them to advance the cause of peace, but so frightened that, instead, they had to rub salt in their adversary's wounds, so as not to lose the political support of their own folks at home. It is imperative that we push peace and democracy at the same time.

One thing I would like to say to the Irish here—both the Irish—Irish from the North and from the Republic, the American Irish—is that it is impossible for you to understand, perhaps, that even though all these issues may seem unrelated, a breakthrough in one area can dramatically increase the confidence and the passion of other peacemakers.

The Good Friday agreement and its overwhelming ratification by voters sent a strong signal around the world. It put a lot of extra pressure on me. Just a few days ago, I had

a meeting with a group of Greek-Americans, and if I heard it once, I heard it 10 times, "Now, you did all that work in Ireland, and you sat there for 9 days and got that Wye agreement, and I do not understand why the Cyprus problem is beyond reach. I know that you can make some progress there."

That's good. Headache for me, probably, but it's good. It's good that when people do things in one part of the world, it makes other people believe that they're not stuck in this mindless rut of conflict.

So I thank you for this award. I'm very proud of my Irish heritage. I'm proud that I could play a role in the process so far. I'm proud of what the First Lady has done with the Vital Voices movement and other ways—for what she has done.

As I can't say too many times, I'm grateful to Senator Mitchell, to the Congressmen and women in this room and beyond who have reached across party lines in America to work for peace across religious lines in Ireland. And I'm very proud of the Irish-American community.

But the people on the other side of the Atlantic still deserve the lion's share of the credit. Many of them are here—Gerry Adams, Lord John Alderdice, David Ervine, Monica McWilliams, Gary McMichael, Malachi Curran—there are others. I thank Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern, their predecessors John Bruton, Albert Reynolds, John Major, Mo Mowlam—one of a kind.

I'm sorry I didn't get here in time to see David Trimble and John Hume off to get the Peace Prize. But I've had some good and good-natured talks with them both. I told David Trimble—I know you noticed this tonight—ever since he won the Nobel Prize, he's dressing a lot better. *[Laughter]* Now, that's a very good sign for peace, you know. *[Laughter]* And my only complaint with the Nobel committee is that they should have given it to more people involved in this process as well. And we'd have had even a bigger, broader—*[inaudible]*—of enthusiasm. I thank you all.

I want you to think about this, because we're at a little bit of a tough spot in the road in Ireland right now. On the day that David and John get the Nobel Peace Prize, for their own work and as stand-ins for many

of you, too, the world will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of one of the greatest documents of the 20th century: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The timing could not be better because, like democracy, the cause of human rights and peace are part and parcel of the same idea: the common claim to dignity of all humanity; the idea that self-respect and mutual respect are not exclusive, but two sides of the coin of peace and harmony.

In his Nobel speech a few years ago, Seamus Heaney said of Northern Ireland, "No place in the world prides itself more on its vigilance and realism. No place considers itself more qualified to censure any flourish of rhetoric or excess of aspiration." I think that is a dignified, Seamus-way of saying, we don't like long speeches telling us what we have to do. So I will give you a short speech telling you what I think we have to do. *[Laughter]*

I hope I can strike the right note between a celebration of how far we've come with a plea to keep the work going. I hope the parties will move quickly to resolve the remaining differences, keeping an open mind, acting in good faith, remembering how much all have gained by the hard work that has already been done. Not only the letter but the spirit of the Good Friday accord must prevail.

I have closely followed recent efforts to hammer out agreements for the new executive political structures, and the bodies to deal with cross-border issues. Bringing these institutions to life is absolutely essential to keep up the momentum for peace, and we urge a speedy resolution. I also applaud the tireless work of John de Chastelain toward achieving the vital goal of disposing of weapons now that the war is over.

Hillary just came back—*[applause]*—thank you—Hillary just came back from a profoundly moving trip to Central America, where our friends and neighbors are struggling in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, the worst hurricane in 200 years. So devastating that we are concerned that, if we don't do all we can to help them rebuild, that they could lose the democracy, the freedom, the peace for which they have fought so long and hard. But one reason, we think, that it will

hold on in Guatemala and El Salvador is because, as a part of their peace process, they were vigorous in decommissioning, in giving up arms and moving toward peace.

Somehow or another, sooner or later, we all have to decide we can't shoot our way out of our differences and our difficulties.

We know the real prize still lies ahead, that day in the not-too-distant future when men, women, and children can walk all the streets of Belfast, Derry, Omagh without fear; when respect and trust has replaced suspicion; when machine guns and explosives are as irrelevant as suits of armor; when investors pour money into new ventures that spread opportunity to all; when the people of Ulster are known far and wide as the people who rose to this great challenge, proved they were bigger than their differences, and were able to go across the world, as I said the last time I was in Northern Ireland.

And look at the people on Cyprus. Look at the people in the Balkans. Look at the people in Central Africa, and say, we did this, and we had troubles centuries old, not just 30 years. We did it. And you can, too.

We cannot afford to be complacent or frustrated or angry. We always knew there would be bumps in the road and that no matter what the referendum vote was, after the Good Friday agreement, there would be difficulties. The United States pledges again to be with you every step of the way, because all of us know that the Irish in America for more than 200 years have brought us to this day, as much as any group of people.

We all know, too, as I will say again, that we must have democracy and human rights in the end to have peace. As long as I am President, I will do everything I can to advance the cause of peace, democracy, and human rights; to do everything I can to anticipate conflicts before they occur; to listen to both sides when they do occur; to do my best to persuade parties that benefits lie just ahead if they stop living in the past and begin to imagine the future. Yes, in Northern Ireland, in the Middle East, in Cambodia, Nigeria, Congo, Cyprus, the Balkans, everywhere where there are children who deserve a better future waiting to be born.

America will always stand with those who take risks for peace. I salute the NDI for

keeping our democratic aspirations in sharp focus. I salute the honorees tonight, those of you whose names were called earlier. You really deserve these awards. I ask you to continue your efforts, to keep your spirits up, to keep your vision high, to remember how we felt when the Good Friday accord was ratified, to remember how you feel on the best days when the worst days come around, and to remember, no matter how tough it gets, it is always better for our children to reach across the lines that divide and build a future that they're all a part of together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:48 p.m. at a National Democratic Institute dinner in the ballroom at the Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Paul G. Kirk, Jr., chairman, Kenneth D. Wollack, president, and Jean Dunn, vice president for administration and development, National Democratic Institute; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; Special Envoy Richard C. Holbrooke; Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; Alliance Party leader Lord John Alderdice; Progressive Unionist Party spokesman David Ervine; Monica McWilliams of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition; Ulster Democratic Party leader Gary McMichael; Northern Ireland Labour Party leader Malachi Curran; Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former Prime Ministers John Bruton and Albert Reynolds of Ireland; United Kingdom Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Marjorie Mowlam; and John de Chastelain, member and chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. The President also mentioned former program officer and technical writer at the State Department, Cecile W. Ledskey, who died December 2.

### **Remarks Honoring General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., of the Tuskegee Airmen** *December 9, 1998*

Thank you. Well, Colonel McGee, I think this is one of those days where I'm supposed to take orders. *[Laughter]* I am delighted to see you. I thank you and Colonel Crockett for the jacket. I can't help saying as a point of personal pride that Colonel Crockett is a citizen of my home State, Arkansas. And we

go back a ways, and we were together not all that long ago, in Cambridge, England, when we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. And we were there together.

Colonel Campbell, I think you were picked to speak not because you were born in Tuskegee but because you give a good speech. *[Laughter]* I think you did a fine job. Thank you, sir.

Let me say to all the Tuskegee Airmen here, we are honored by your presence and grateful for your service. I'd like to ask all the Tuskegee Airmen who are here just to stand for a moment so we can express our appreciation. They are out in the audience as well as here. Please stand. *[Applause]* Thank you very much.

There are so many distinguished people here in the audience; let me begin by thanking Secretary Cohen for his outstanding leadership. Janet, we're glad to see you here, glad you did that interview with General Davis many years ago. I thank the people from the White House who are here, General Kerrick and others; the people from the Pentagon, Deputy Secretary Hamre, Secretary Caldera, Secretary Danzig, Acting Secretary Peters, General Shelton, all the Joint Chiefs are here today.

I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Senator John McCain, the driving force behind the legislation to authorize this promotion. Thank you, sir.

I also want to thank one of the finest supporters of our military and of this action in the United States Congress, Senator Chuck Robb, for being here. Thank you, sir—and leaders of the veterans and service organization, members of the Armed Forces. There are many, many distinguished guests here, but I would like to mention two. First, a great American and former Secretary of Transportation, William Coleman, who is here. Thank you for coming, Mr. Secretary Coleman—and Matt, his son, has served with great distinction in the Pentagon; we thank him for that.

And I'd like to recognize Governor Doug Wilder from Virginia, who has been very actively involved and wrote an introduction to a book about General Davis. Thank you for being here.

And we want to welcome Mrs. Elnora Davis McLendon and the family and friends of General Davis who are gathered here, and especially General Davis himself.

Much of the distinguished record of General Davis and the Tuskegee Airmen has been mentioned, but I would like, for the record of history, for you to bear with me and allow me to tell this story and the story of this remarkable family.

Today we advance to the rank of four-star general, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a hero in war, a leader in peace, a pioneer for freedom, opportunity, and basic human dignity. He earned this honor a long time ago. Our Armed Forces today are a model for America and for the world of how people of different backgrounds working together for the common good can perform at a far more outstanding level than they ever could have divided.

Perhaps no one is more responsible for that achievement than the person we honor today. When the doors were shut on him, he knocked again and again until finally they opened, until his sheer excellence and determination made it impossible to keep them closed. Once the doors were open, he made sure they stayed open for others to follow. Some who followed are in this audience today.

In 1899 General Davis' father, Benjamin Davis, Sr., a skilled National Guardsman, sought entry into West Point. He was told no blacks would be appointed. Undeterred, he enlisted in the Army and distinguished himself immediately. In less than 2 years, he was an officer. It takes longer if you go to West Point. *[Laughter]*

Twenty years later, Colonel Davis was teaching at the Tuskegee Institute. The Klu Klux Klan announced it would march through the Davises' neighborhood. The Institute instructed its staff to stay indoors, turn out their lights, to keep from provoking the marchers. But Colonel Davis refused. Instead, he put on his dress uniform, turned on the porch light, gathered his family. Theirs was the only light for miles. But they sat proudly and bravely outside as the hate marchers passed by. Benjamin Davis, Jr., never forgot about his father's shining porch light.

As a teenager, inspired by Charles Lindbergh's historic flight, he dreamed of becoming an aviator and a trailblazer. With hard work, he did gain admission to West Point, the very opportunity denied his father. The father saw that the son had the chance not only to serve his country but to inspire African-Americans all across America.

"Remember," he wrote, "12 million people will be pulling for you with all we have." But at West Point, as you have already heard today, Benjamin Davis was quite alone. For 4 years, fellow cadets refused to speak to him, hoping to drive him out. "What they didn't realize," he later recalled, "was that I was stubborn enough to put up with the treatment to reach the goal I had come to attain."

His request to join the Air Corps upon graduation was denied because no units accepted blacks. Though he ranked 35th out of a class of 276, West Point's Superintendent advised him to pursue a career outside the Army. He refused. Arriving at Fort Benning to command an infantry company, he was again shunned from the Officers' Club, subject to segregation on and off the base.

But times were changing as World War II dawned. Just as President Roosevelt promoted Benjamin Davis, Sr., to Brigadier General, the first African-American general in our Nation's history, he ordered the Air Corps to create a black flying group. Benjamin Davis was named its leader, and in the spring of 1943, the 99th Fighter Squadron departed for North Africa and began combat missions. Their group commander soon recommended they be removed from combat, however, claiming—listen to this—that a black American did not have the desire or the proper reflexes to make a first-class fighter pilot.

Colonel Davis then proved he was just as skilled in the conference room as in the cockpit. His testimony, as you have so eloquently heard today, carried the day before a military panel, making the case for ability and bravery. The panel recommended that the 99th be reinstated and that more African-American squadrons be sent overseas.

Returned to the skies as we all know, the Tuskegee Airmen proved themselves again and again. They destroyed far more planes

than they lost; they disabled hundreds of enemy boxcars. They even sank an enemy destroyer, a unique achievement in the war. And as you have heard twice now, during 200 escort missions above the Third Reich, they never lost a single bomber to enemy fire.

The Tuskegee Airmen's extraordinary success and the invaluable contributions of other blacks and minorities in the war helped to turn the tide against official racism and to pave the way for President Truman's historic order 50 years ago mandating, and I quote, "equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services." This led to an end of segregation in our forces.

For 25 years after the war, Benjamin Davis, Jr., rose to complex security challenges in Air Force postings at home and abroad. Wherever he went, he overcame bigotry through professionalism and performance. Following his retirement in 1970, he continued his distinguished public service, including at senior positions at the Department of Transportation.

I'd like to say something personal. A lot of these old-fashioned, almost amazing arguments against the capacity of black Americans were still very much in vogue during the civil rights movement in the 1950's and the 1960's. And for children like me who were taught that the civil rights movement was the right thing to do in the South, and who engaged in countless arguments against inane statements, you have to remember, we were raised in the generation right after World War II, and everyone recognized that everything about World War II in our minds was ideal and perfect and insurmountable and unsurpassable. The one stopper that any southerner had in a civil rights argument was the Tuskegee Airmen. They will never know how much it meant to us.

General Davis, through it all you have had the steadfast support of your wife, Agatha, whom I know is home today thinking of you. You struggled and succeeded together. I think you all should know that in 1973, Mrs. Davis wrote to a cadet who had been silenced by his classmates: "I think I know what your life at the Academy must have been. My best friend spent 4 years of silence at the Point. From 1936, when I married that best friend

of mine, until 1949, I, too, was silenced by his classmates and their wives. There will always be those who will stand in your way. Don't resent them. Just feel sorry for them, and hold your head high."

Like so many military spouses past and present, this exceptional woman, an officer's wife who spent World War II toiling in a munitions factory, has worked and sacrificed to defend our freedom. And General, just as we salute you today, we salute her as well.

When Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., became an officer, he was the only black officer in our Air Corps. Now the Air Force has 4,000. Minorities and women remain underrepresented in our officer corps, but General Davis is here today as living proof that a person can overcome adversity and discrimination, achieve great things, turn skeptics into believers, and through example and perseverance, one person can bring truly extraordinary change.

So often today, America faces the challenge of helping to prevent conflicts overseas, fueled by these very divisions of race and ethnicity and religious differences. On Saturday I am going on a mission of peace to the Middle East, still embroiled in such conflicts. We cannot meet these challenges abroad unless we have healed our divisions at home.

To all of us, General Davis, you are the very embodiment of the principle that from diversity we can build an even stronger unity and that in diversity we can find the strength to prevail and advance. If we follow your example, America will always be strong, growing stronger. We will always be a leader for democracy, opportunity, and peace. We will be able to fulfill the promise of our Founders, to be a nation of equal rights and dignity for all, whose citizens pledge to each other our lives, our fortune, our sacred honor, in pursuit of that more perfect Union.

I am very, very proud, General Davis, of your service. On behalf of all Americans, I thank you. I thank you for everything you have done, for everything you have been, for what you have permitted the rest of us Americans to become.

Now I would like to ask the military aide to read the citation, after which, I invite General Davis' sister, Mrs. Elnora Davis

McLendon, to join me in pinning on the General's fourth star.

Read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:49 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to original Tuskegee Airmen Col. Charles McGee, USAF (Ret.), Lt. Col. Woodrow Crockett, USAF (Ret.), and Col. William A. Campbell, USAF (Ret.); Janet Langhart, wife of Defense Secretary William S. Cohen; and former Gov. Doug Wilder of Virginia.

### **Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree**

*December 9, 1997*

Thank you very much. Thank you, John. I want to thank you and all the people responsible, again, for this wonderful, wonderful evening. I'd like to thank our performers: Tony Bennett, Leona Mitchell, Jose Feliciano, the "Cats" crew, the Paul Hill choir, Al Roker, who has been a great Santa Claus tonight. I'd like to thank our Brownie and Cub Scout, Jessica Scott and Edgar Allen Sheppard. And of course, I'd like to thank Sammy Sosa and Mrs. Sosa for joining us tonight. We're delighted to see them all.

Hillary and I look forward to this every year, and this, as you may know, is the 75th anniversary of this Christmas tree lighting. For us, Christmas always starts with this Pageant of Peace. Tonight we celebrate the beginning of this season of peace and hope, of sharing and giving, of family and friends. We celebrate the birth of the child we know as the Prince of Peace, who came into the world with only a stable's roof to shelter him but grew to teach a lesson of love that has lasted two millennia. "Blessed are the peacemakers," he said, and his words still call us to action.

The lights we illuminate tonight are more than the flickering bulbs on a beautiful Colorado blue spruce. They represent millions of individual acts of courage and compassion that light our lives. Like the Star of Bethlehem, these lights shine the promise of hope and renewal. Like the candles of Hanukkah, they stand for freedom against tyranny. Like the lamps that will soon light the mosques



in the coming months of Ramadan, they evoke a call to community.

We light this tree in Washington, but all over the world we thank God that the light of peace is glowing as never before, in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, in the Middle East. In the coming year, let us rededicate ourselves to building the bonds of peace on Earth. Let those of us who are Americans express our appreciation to those who serve us in uniform, represented tonight by the United States Air Force Band, who help to preserve peace for us.

Now I'd like to ask Sammy and Jessica and Edgar to come up here and join me as we light the Christmas tree, our national tree. Let the spirit of the holidays, of peace and good will, be our beacon all year long. Merry Christmas. Happy New Year. May God bless you all.

Now put your hands on the switch, and I'll count down to one. Three, two, one. Light the tree!

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to John J. Betchkal, president, Christmas Pageant of Peace; and baseball player Sammy Sosa, National League Most Valuable Player, and his wife, Sonia.

### **Message on the Observance of Hanukkah, 1998**

*December 9, 1998*

Warm greetings to all those celebrating Hanukkah.

For eight consecutive nights during this twilight of the year, in Jewish homes across America and around the world, the flames of the menorah will once again brighten steadfast spirits and gladden faithful hearts. Commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem more than two millennia ago, Hanukkah is a joyous celebration of the victory of the righteous over oppression and a reaffirmation of religious freedom as a fundamental right of people everywhere. This Festival of Lights is a reminder to all of us of the many blessings that brighten our lives: the love of God, the gift of freedom, the strength of family and community, and the hope of lasting peace.

As millions of families gather to kindle the flames of the menorah and to recite the special prayers of Hanukkah, Hillary and I extend our best wishes for a memorable celebration and for happiness and peace in the coming year.

**Bill Clinton**

### **Memorandum on the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights** *December 9, 1998*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* The Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights

This month we mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations General Assembly declaration affirming a universal standard of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In so doing, we also honor the legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt, who served as the first Chairperson of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and who was the driving force behind the Declaration.

To reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the Declaration and to honor the contributions of Eleanor Roosevelt, I hereby direct you to establish the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights. You are authorized to take all necessary steps to establish an appropriate awards program under the auspices of your Department to recognize distinguished Americans who have made especially meritorious contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights within the United States or around the world.

These awards will be presented on or about December 10 of each year as part of the commemoration of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Prior to November 15 of each year, you shall present to me a list of nominees from which I will select up to five individuals or groups of individuals to receive this award. In preparing your list of nominees, you may consider the recommendations of appropriate individuals and groups and coordinate your nominations in consultation with other Federal agencies as appropriate. You may include recommendations for posthumous awards.

You are directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

**William J. Clinton**

**Remarks at the Presentation of the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights**

*December 10, 1998*

Thank you very much. I want to welcome all of you here, the Members of Congress, the members of our foreign policy team who have worked on this, National Security Adviser Berger, Under Secretary Loy, Assistant Secretary Koh. I welcome Ambassador Nancy Rubin, the Ambassador of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights; Theresa Loar, the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues; members of the Roosevelt family; and other distinguished guests.

I would like to say also, before getting into my prepared remarks, that someday when I write the memoirs of these last several years, one of the proudest moments of our administration for me will be the work the First Lady has done to advance the cause of human rights. I remember the speech she gave in Beijing on a rainy day when people were struggling through the mud to get into that remote facility, the talk she gave just a few days ago at Gaston Hall at Georgetown University about Eleanor Roosevelt—I think one of the finest speeches she ever gave—but more important, the concrete work, the Vital Voices work in Northern Ireland and Latin America and all the little villages she visited in Latin America and Africa and Asia, on the Indian Subcontinent to try to advance the condition of women and children, especially young girls.

And I think that every person who has ever been the parent of a daughter could identify strongly with the remarks she just made and the brave women who were just introduced.

You know, most of us, at least who have reached a certain age, we look forward to the holidays when our daughters come home from college, and they have the human right to decide whether they want to come home or not. [*Laughter*] When our daughters are married, and they have our grandchildren,

we hope they'll find a way to come home. Imagine—I just wish there were some way for every American citizen to imagine how they would feel if the people Hillary just discussed were their daughters. I hope we can do more.

We are sponsoring these awards today and announcing them because, as all of you know so well, 50 years ago in Paris the U.N. General Assembly voted to approve the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was a watershed moment for what was then a very young United Nations; a new chapter, however, in a much, much older story, the unending striving of humanity to realize its potential in the life of every person.

For its time, the Universal Declaration was quite bold. If you look at the way the world is going today, it's still quite a bold document. Like all great breakthroughs, it was an act of imagination and courage, an opening of the heart and the mind with spare elegance. It served notice that for all our differences, we share a common birthright.

You know, it's easy for us to forget, but if you think back to 1948, it might not have been particularly easy to affirm faith in mankind's future. After all, it was just 3 years after a cataclysmic war and the Holocaust; the cold war was beginning to blight the post-war landscape; millions and millions more would die just in the Soviet Union under the terror of Stalin.

But this document did reaffirm faith in humankind. It is really the Magna Carta of our humanity. Article I states that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

There are no commas or parentheses in this sentence, no qualifications or exceptions, just the power of affirmation.

Other articles assert the freedom to worship, to work, to assemble, to participate in a life of meaning and purpose. Those words have now been translated into every language of the United Nations. Though 50 years old, they still ring free, fresh, and powerful, don't they? They resonate today, because today human dignity is still under siege, not something that can be taken for granted anywhere.

We all know how much the Declaration owed to the remarkable leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt. She rose to every challenge. She defended American idealism. She honestly admitted our own imperfections. She always called on the best from each delegate, and she called on it again and again and again. Indeed, a delegate from Panama grew so exhausted by the pace that he had to remind Mrs. Roosevelt that the delegates had human rights, too. [Laughter]

Today we celebrate the life of this document and the lives it has saved and enhanced. Mrs. Roosevelt worried that it would be hard to translate ideas on paper into real places, into kitchens and factories and ghettos and prisons. But words have power. Ideas have power. And the march for human rights has steadily gained ground.

Since 1948, the United Nations have adopted legal instruments against torture, genocide, slavery, apartheid, and discrimination against women and children. As nations grow more interdependent, the idea of a unified standard of human rights becomes easier to define and, more important than ever, to maintain.

Obviously, all nations have more work to do, and the United States is no exception. We must improve our own record. We must correct our own mistakes, even as we fulfill our responsibility to insist on improvement in other nations; in totalitarian states, like North Korea; in military dictatorships, like Burma; in countries where leaders practice the politics of ethnic hatred, like Serbia and Iraq; in African nations where tribal differences have led to unimaginable slaughter; in nations where tolerance and faith must struggle against intolerant fundamentalism, like Afghanistan and Sudan; in Cuba, where persons who strive for peaceful democratic change still are repressed and imprisoned; in China, where change has come to people's daily lives, but where basic political rights are still denied to too many.

Some suggest today that it is sheer arrogance for the President or for the United States to discuss such matters in other countries. Some say it is because we are not perfect here at home. If we had to wait for perfection, none of us would ever advance in any way. Some say it is because there are

Asian values or African values or Western values dividing the human race into various sub-categories. Well, let's be honest. There are. There are genuine cultural differences which inevitably lead to different political and social structures. And that can be all to the good, because no one has a corner on the truth. It makes life more interesting.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not say there are no differences among people. It says what we have in common is more fundamental than our differences, and therefore, all the differences must be expressed within certain limits beyond which we dare not go without violating our common humanity.

This is a phony attack on those of you who fight every day for human rights. None of us want everyone to be the same; none of us want to have all the same religious practices; none of us want to have all the same social and political structures; none of us say we know exactly how life should be organized everywhere under all circumstances and how every problem should be solved. We say we have a common humanity and whatever you think should be done differently must be done within the limits that respects our common humanity.

Now, that means a lot to us on the verge of a new century, where freedom and knowledge and flexibility will mean more to people than ever before, where people in the poorest villages on every continent on this Earth will have a chance to leapfrog years and years and years of the development process simply because of the communications revolution, if we respect universal human rights.

The Vice President said so well recently, in Asia, that we believe the peaceful democratic process that we have strongly endorsed will be even more essential to the world on the threshold of this new millennium. Throughout 1998, old fears and hatreds crumbled before the healing power of honest communication, faith in the future, a strong will for a better future.

Today in Oslo—I'm happy about this—today in Oslo, two leaders from Northern Ireland, John Hume and David Trimble, are

receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts on the Good Friday accord. In the Middle East, where I will go in 2 days, Palestinians and Israelis are struggling to bridge mutual distrust to implement the Wye accords. In Kosovo, a serious humanitarian crisis has been averted, and the process toward reconciliation continues in Bosnia. All these breakthroughs were triumphs for human rights.

Today we recommit ourselves to the ideas of the Universal Declaration, to keep moving toward the promise outlined in Paris 50 years ago.

First, we're taking steps to respond quickly to genocidal conditions, through the International Coalition Against Genocide I announced during my visit to Africa and a new genocide early warning center sponsored by the Department of State and the CIA. We will provide additional support to the U.N. Torture Victims Fund and genocide survivors in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Cambodia. We will continue assistance to women suffering under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. And USAID will provide up to \$8 million to NGO's to enhance their ability to respond more rapidly to human rights emergencies.

Second, we must do more for children who have always been especially vulnerable to human rights violations. This year I sought and Congress provided dramatic new support for the fight against child labor with a tenfold increase in United States assistance to the International Labor Organization. Today the Immigration and Naturalization Service is issuing new guidelines for the evaluation of asylum claims by children, making the process better serve our youngest and most vulnerable asylum seekers.

Third, we must practice at home what we preach abroad. Just this morning I signed an Executive order that strengthens our ability to implement human rights treaties and creates an interagency group to hold us accountable for progress in honoring those commitments.

Fourth, I am concerned about aliens who suffer abuses at the hands of smugglers and sweatshop owners. These victims actually have a built-in disincentive—their unlawful status here—that discourages them from complaining to U.S. authorities. So I'm ask-

ing the Department of Justice to provide legislative options to address this problem. And I know the Deputy Attorney General, Eric Holder, and the Deputy Secretary of Labor, Kitty Higgins, are here, and I trust they will work on this, because I know they care as much about it as I do.

Finally, I'd like to repeat my support for two top legislative priorities, an employment nondiscrimination act that would ban discrimination against gays and lesbians in the workplace, and a hate crimes prevention act. Last year, the entire Nation was outraged by the brutal killings of Matthew Shepard, a young gay student in Wyoming, and James Byrd, an African-American in Texas. All Americans are entitled to the same respect and legal protection, no matter their race, their gender, their sexual orientation. I agree with something President Truman once said, "When I say Americans, I mean all Americans."

We will never relinquish the fight to move forward in the continuing struggle for human rights. I am aware that much of the best work in human rights has been done by those outside government: students and activists, NGO's, brave religious leaders, people from all backgrounds who simply want a better, safer world for their children. Many have done so in the face of great adversity, the imprisoned members of the Internal Dissidents Working Group in Cuba, the political prisoners of the National League for Democracy in Burma, the imprisoned dissidents in China. We make common cause with them all.

That is why today we are presenting the first Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights to four outstanding Americans, not only for their own efforts but because we know that, by working together, we can do more. From different backgrounds and generations, they stand, all, in the great tradition of Eleanor Roosevelt, pioneers in the fight to expand the frontiers of freedom: Robert Bernstein, a pathbreaker for freedom of expression and the protection of rights at home and abroad; Bette Bao Lord, the head of Freedom House, a prolific author and campaigner; Dorothy Thomas, a champion of women's rights, the voice of a new generation committed to human rights; and John Lewis,

a veteran in the civil rights struggle, now serving his Congress with great distinction in the House of Representatives.

I would like to ask the military aide to read the citations.

[At this point, Lt. Comdr. Wesley Huey, USN, Naval Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the awards.]

I'd like to ask the members of the Roosevelt family who are here to stand. [Applause] Thank you.

The day the U.N. delegates voted to approve the declaration, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, "Long job over." [Laughter] One of the few mistakes she ever made. [Laughter] She left us and all our successors a big job that will never be over, for the Universal Declaration contains an eternal promise, one embraced by our Founders in 1776, one that has to be reaffirmed every day in every way.

In our country, each generation of Americans has had to do it: in the struggle against slavery led by President Lincoln, in FDR's Four Freedoms, in the unfinished work of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, in the ongoing work here in this room.

I have learned in ways large and small in the last 6 years that there is within every person a scale of justice and that people can too easily be herded into hatred and extremism, often out of a belief that they have absolute truth and, therefore, are entitled to absolute power, that they can ignore any constitution, any laws, override any facts. There will always be work to be done. And again, I would say to you that this award we gave to these four richly deserving people is also for all of you who labor for human rights.

In the prolog of John Lewis's magnificent autobiography, "Walking With the Wind," he tells a stunning story that has become a metaphor for his life and is a metaphor for your work, about being a little boy with his brothers and sisters and cousins in the house of a relative, that was a very fragile house, when an enormous wind came up. And he said he was told that all the children had to hold hands, and one corner of the house would blow up in the wind and all the children would walk, holding hands, to the corner, and it would go down. And then another would

come up, and all the children would hold hands again and go to the other corner until the house came down. And by walking with the wind, hand-in-hand, they saved the house and the family and the children.

John says that that walk is a struggle to find the beloved community. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies to individuals, but it can only be achieved by our common community.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble and Social Democratic Party leader John Hume of Northern Ireland.

## **Proclamation 7158—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 1998**

*December 10, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Thanks to the foresight of our Founding Fathers and their commitment to human rights, we live in a Nation founded upon the principles of equality, justice, and freedom—principles guaranteed to us by our Constitution. With the memory of tyranny fresh in their minds, the members of the First Congress of the United States proposed constitutional amendments known as the Bill of Rights, making explicit and forever protecting our Nation's cherished freedoms of religion, speech, press, and assembly.

But human rights have never been solely a domestic concern. Americans have always sought to share these rights with oppressed people around the world. In his annual message to the Congress, on January 6, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt articulated this desire: "In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want . . .

The fourth is freedom from fear . . . anywhere in the world . . . The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.”

Fifty years ago, on December 10, 1948, the world reached a major milestone toward FDR’s vision when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration—drafted by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt—established an international standard that recognized the “inherent dignity” and the “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family . . .” It denounced past “disregard and contempt for human rights [that] have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind . . .”

Today, a majority of the world’s people live in democracies and exercise their right to freely choose their own governments. International war crimes tribunals seek justice for victims and their families by working to ensure that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide do not go unpunished. And we are heartened by the progress toward peace made in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, and elsewhere, which advances the cause of human rights. But there are still many areas where human rights abuses are committed with impunity—unchecked and unpunished.

To reaffirm our Nation’s unequivocal commitment to upholding human rights, today I am issuing an Executive order to create an interagency working group to help enforce the human rights treaties we have already ratified and to make recommendations on treaties we have yet to ratify. In addition, my Administration is working to establish a genocide early warning center and to fund non-governmental organizations that respond rapidly in human rights emergencies. The Department of State is working to provide additional assistance for Afghan women and girls under the oppressive rule of the Taliban. We are also supporting the work of the International Labor Organization in its efforts to eliminate child labor. Finally, the Immigration and Naturalization Service is issuing guidelines on how to handle cases where children seek asylum in the United States.

This year, as we come together to celebrate the Declaration’s 50th anniversary, let us not forget the driving force behind its creation. We are grateful that Eleanor Roosevelt brought her prodigious energies and talents to this task. And it is fitting that we have established the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights, honoring others for their important contributions to protecting human rights around the world.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said that “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Her accomplishments serve as an inspiration to us all, and each of us can play a part in preserving and promoting her enduring legacy. Let us each embrace the Declaration’s promise by striving to uphold its principles and defending the rights it embodies.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 10, 1998, as Human Rights Day; December 15, 1998, as Bill of Rights Day; and the week beginning December 10, 1998, as Human Rights Week. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate these observances with appropriate activities, ceremonies, and programs that demonstrate our national commitment to the Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the promotion and protection of human rights for all people.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 14, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 15.

**Executive Order 13107—  
Implementation of Human  
Rights Treaties**  
*December 10, 1998*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and bearing in mind the obligations of the United States pursuant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and other relevant treaties concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights to which the United States is now or may become a party in the future, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Implementation of Human Rights Obligations.** (a) It shall be the policy and practice of the Government of the United States, being committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, fully to respect and implement its obligations under the international human rights treaties to which it is a party, including the ICCPR, the CAT, and the CERD.

(b) It shall also be the policy and practice of the Government of the United States to promote respect for international human rights, both in our relationships with all other countries and by working with and strengthening the various international mechanisms for the promotion of human rights, including, *inter alia*, those of the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, and the Organization of American States.

**Sec. 2. Responsibility of Executive Departments and Agencies.** (a) All executive departments and agencies (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 101–105, including boards and commissions, and hereinafter referred to collectively as “agency” or “agencies”) shall maintain a current awareness of United States international human rights obligations that are relevant to their functions and shall perform such functions so as to respect and implement those obligations fully. The head of each agency shall designate a single contact officer who will be responsible for overall coordination

of the implementation of this order. Under this order, all such agencies shall retain their established institutional roles in the implementation, interpretation, and enforcement of Federal law and policy.

(b) The heads of agencies shall have lead responsibility in coordination with other appropriate agencies, for questions concerning implementation of human rights obligations that fall within their respective operating and program responsibilities and authorities or, to the extent that matters do not fall within the operating and program responsibilities and authorities of any agency, that most closely relate to their general areas of concern.

**Sec. 3. Human Rights Inquiries and Complaints.** Each agency shall take lead responsibility in coordination with other appropriate agencies, for responding to inquiries, requests for information, and complaints about violations of human rights obligations that fall within its areas of responsibility or, if the matter does not fall within its areas of responsibility, referring it to the appropriate agency for response.

**Sec. 4. Interagency Working Group on Human Rights Treaties.** (a) There is hereby established an Interagency Working Group on Human Rights Treaties for the purpose of providing guidance, oversight, and coordination with respect to questions concerning the adherence to and implementation of human rights obligations and related matters.

(b) The designee of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs shall chair the Interagency Working Group, which shall consist of appropriate policy and legal representatives at the Assistant Secretary level from the Department of State, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other agencies as the chair deems appropriate. The principal members may designate alternates to attend meetings in their stead.

(c) The principal functions of the Interagency Working Group shall include:

(i) coordinating the interagency review of any significant issues concerning the implementation of this order and analysis and recommendations in connection with pursuing

the ratification of human rights treaties, as such questions may from time to time arise;

(ii) coordinating the preparation of reports that are to be submitted by the United States in fulfillment of treaty obligations;

(iii) coordinating the responses of the United States Government to complaints against it concerning alleged human rights violations submitted to the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and other international organizations;

(iv) developing effective mechanisms to ensure that legislation proposed by the Administration is reviewed for conformity with international human rights obligations and that these obligations are taken into account in reviewing legislation under consideration by the Congress as well;

(v) developing recommended proposals and mechanisms for improving the monitoring of the actions by the various States, Commonwealths, and territories of the United States and, where appropriate, of Native Americans and Federally recognized Indian tribes, including the review of State, Commonwealth, and territorial laws for their conformity with relevant treaties, the provision of relevant information for reports and other monitoring purposes, and the promotion of effective remedial mechanisms;

(vi) developing plans for public outreach and education concerning the provisions of the ICCPR, CAT, CERD, and other relevant treaties, and human rights-related provisions of domestic law;

(vii) coordinating and directing an annual review of United States reservations, declarations, and understandings to human rights treaties, and matters as to which there have been nontrivial complaints or allegations of inconsistency with or breach of international human rights obligations, in order to determine whether there should be consideration of any modification of relevant reservations, declarations, and understandings to human rights treaties, or United States practices or laws. The results and recommendations of this review shall be reviewed by the head of each participating agency;

(viii) making such other recommendations as it shall deem appropriate to the President, through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, concerning United

States adherence to or implementation of human rights treaties and related matters; and

(ix) coordinating such other significant tasks in connection with human rights treaties or international human rights institutions, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Special Rapporteurs and complaints procedures established by the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

(d) The work of the Interagency Working Group shall not supplant the work of other interagency entities, including the President's Committee on the International Labor Organization, that address international human rights issues.

**Sec. 5. Cooperation Among Executive Departments and Agencies.** All agencies shall cooperate in carrying out the provisions of this order. The Interagency Working Group shall facilitate such cooperative measures.

**Sec. 6. Judicial Review, Scope, and Administration.** (a) Nothing in this order shall create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by any party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

(b) This order does not supersede Federal statutes and does not impose any justiciable obligations on the executive branch.

(c) The term "treaty obligations" shall mean treaty obligations as approved by the Senate pursuant to Article II, section 2, clause 2 of the United States Constitution.

(d) To the maximum extent practicable and subject to the availability of appropriations, agencies shall carry out the provisions of this order.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
December 10, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 14, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 15.



**Remarks on the Unveiling of a  
Portrait of Former Secretary of  
Agriculture Michael Espy**

*December 10, 1998*

Oh, happy day. [*Laughter*] I'd like to begin by thanking Deputy Secretary Rominger, who has served so well both Secretary Espy and Secretary Glickman. I thank Dan Glickman and Rhoda for being a part of our administration's family.

Dan Glickman pointed out when I discussed this appointment with him that he would be in the proud tradition of my commitment to a Cabinet that looks like America and to diversity because there were even fewer Jewish farmers than black farmers. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my friends Reverend Wintley Phipps, Reverend Walter Fauntroy, Reverend Beecher Hicks, and the Howard Gospel Choir here. They are wonderful. I thank the members of the Cabinet and former members of the Cabinet who are here, Secretary Herman, Secretary Richardson, Secretary O'Leary, EPA Administrator Browner, Ambassador Barshefsky. John Podesta and Bob Nash and a whole slew of people from the White House are here; Senator Leahy, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, Congressmen Clyburn, Jefferson, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Stenholm, Congressman Thompson. We're glad to see former Congressmen Montgomery and Coelho and many other former Members of Congress here. And Reverend Jackson, thank you for coming; and to the Espy family and all the members of Mike Espy's extended family here.

Six years ago, on Christmas Eve, I announced that I would nominate, and I quote, "my neighbor, my friend, and my supporter, Mike Espy" to be Secretary of Agriculture. He was a young Congressman from Mississippi when I served as Governor of Arkansas. We shared a passion for many issues, including rural development.

As a Congressman, Mike worked with my Senator, Dale Bumpers, to set up the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, a commission I had the honor to chair. It brought jobs and growth to one of America's poorest, least developed regions. I came to

know and respect Mike Espy in that endeavor.

I knew we also shared a vision for America, a new approach to government rooted in our most enduring values, changed and shaped to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The need for change was nowhere more evident than at the Department of Agriculture, which has, as Dan Glickman said, since the time of President Lincoln, nurtured the seeds of renewal for America.

On Christmas Eve I said, "The Department of Agriculture can't simply be a stolid representative of the interests of the past. It has to be a real force for family farmers in our country, for the agricultural issues of today and tomorrow." Mike understood that. As the first African-American to become the Secretary of Agriculture, he was the very embodiment of change. Not only here but in many other areas of administration policy—one of eight African-Americans who have now served in the President's Cabinet in the last 6 years. And I am very grateful for that.

And I'm grateful to Senator Leahy and Senator Carol Moseley-Braun for confirming them all.

In his 2 years at the helm Mike changed the Department of Agriculture as profoundly and beneficially as any Secretary in its history. It is fitting today we raise his portrait. He made history, and today we honor him for it.

I'd like to talk a little bit about his record as Secretary of Agriculture. His first great challenge came only a few days after he started on the job, when an outbreak of *e-coli* from tainted meat took the lives of three children in Washington State. Mike went to Washington, promised the victims' families strong action, and he delivered.

The new science-based inspection procedures developed during his tenure and put into place under Secretary Glickman have cut incidents of salmonella contamination in pork by a third, in poultry by nearly 50 percent, according to the preliminary data we have. The Department of Agriculture has no higher responsibility than ensuring the safety of America's food supply. Today it is fulfilling that responsibility, thanks in no small measure to Mike Espy's leadership.

Mike's second great challenge came in 1993 also. It was a challenging year, when floods of biblical proportion struck the Midwest. In the past, the Federal Government had earned a reputation for slow and inadequate responses to natural disasters. But Mike Espy, along with James Lee Witt at FEMA, helped set a new, higher standard of Government service, providing thousands of communities and millions of Americans with the aid they needed swiftly and efficiently.

His third great challenge at USDA was to help our economy and our farm sector by expanding markets for America's agricultural bounty. When we negotiated the GATT accords in later 1993, some of the greatest obstacles were agricultural issues. Nobody worked harder, with greater success, to work through those issues and pave the way for the passage of GATT than Secretary Espy.

His fourth great challenge was to make USDA smaller, stronger, more responsive to farmers and consumers. In just 2 short years, Mike put in motion a process, which Secretary Glickman has carried through, that has reduced the work force by 18,000, closed and consolidated over 1,000 field offices, saved the taxpayers of our country \$4.8 billion, all the while, thanks to the employees here, improving services to farmers, many of whom can now visit one location instead of driving from one USDA field office to another. I thank him, and I thank all of you who work here, for doing that.

The list of the good things he did for America goes on and on. He set higher nutritional standards for school lunches. He helped end the gridlock over logging on Federal lands in the Northwest. He spearheaded the Water 2000 effort to make sure that, by the end of the century, no American is without fresh, clean drinking water. Starting in Congress, continuing as Agriculture Secretary, Mike worked to win more resources for minority farmers and to fight discrimination in USDA programs, a fight that Secretary Glickman has energetically continued. I thank both of them for that.

This year, finally, we fought for and won legislation to allow minority farmers discrimination claims from almost the last two decades finally to be heard.

Mike left the USDA in 1994 to face a different kind of challenge, one no person could have chosen, but one he faced with characteristic resolve, integrity, and strength. I'd like to say—I don't know if this is appropriate or not, but I think we ought to give Mr. Weingarten and Mr. Wells a hand and ask them to stand. They did a heck of a job. *[Applause]* Thank you.

Mike drew inspiration from his family, his friends, the Holy Scripture. With his head held high, he persevered, and he triumphed. Often, Mike talks fondly of his late father Henry, who was a USDA Agricultural Extension Agent in Arkansas in the early 1940's, back in the days when black extension agents only served black farmers. The pride Henry Espy would feel if he could see this portrait of his son hanging in this room is something we can only imagine. But the pride that we can feel, for Mike, for the USDA, and for the progress of our Nation, is every bit as real.

I think all of us have been deeply moved to see this good man grow in mind, body, and spirit through this difficult ordeal. He often said he read the 27th Psalm. When I saw him outside the courtroom, I thought of the wonderful passage from Isaiah: "Be not afraid. I have redeemed you. I have called you by my name. You are mine." Well, Mike, the jury redeemed you, and you belong to the American people, and we are very proud of you.

Now I would like to ask Mike's children, Jamilla and Mike, to join me in unveiling this fine portrait by the Mississippi artist, Jason Bouldin, who is also here. I would like to ask Mr. Bouldin to come up and stand on the stage with us, so we can appreciate his handiwork.

*[At this point, the portrait was unveiled.]*

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I think it's high time we heard from the man we came to honor, Secretary Mike Espy.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. at the Department of Agriculture. In his remarks, he referred to Rhoda Glickman, wife of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; and attorneys Reid H. Weingarten and Ted Wells, Jr.

## **Statement on the National Education Goals Report**

*December 10, 1998*

Today's release of the annual National Education Goals Report shows that America has made some progress toward achieving the National Education Goals but still has a long way to go. If we are going to reach these goals, we must strengthen accountability and raise standards for students, teachers, and schools. I will continue to press Congress to help give our students smaller classes, well-prepared teachers, and modernized school buildings. I will continue my efforts to expand access to early childhood programs, increase public school choice, make our schools safe, disciplined, and drug free, open the doors of college education, and help Americans engage in lifelong learning.

I am pleased at the progress that the report shows in helping our young children arrive at school ready to learn, improving student achievement in math, and increasing the participation of women and minorities in math and science in higher education. Those responsible for such gains—parents and teachers, local and State education officials, colleges and universities, the business community, and students themselves—should be proud of what they have accomplished.

But we must do more. Education is a local function, a State responsibility, and a national priority. The National Education Goals define excellence in education, and Americans at all levels must redouble our efforts to meet them.

## **Remarks Following Discussions With Central American Leaders**

*December 11, 1998*

**President Clinton.** Good morning. I have just concluded a very good meeting with the leaders of five Central American nations: President Rodriguez of Costa Rica, President Flores of Honduras, President Aleman of Nicaragua, President Calderon Sol of El Salvador, and Vice President Flores of Guatemala. We send our best wishes to President Arzu, who is in Guatemala recovering from a bout of pneumonia.

Over the past decade, Central Americans have transformed their countries. Nations where freedom once was denied, where there was once fear and violence, have now joined their neighbors as democracies in peace. Economic development has raised many from poverty. Now nature has put that progress at risk.

Central American nations face in varying degrees the formidable task of rebuilding from the region's deadliest storm in modern history: 9,000 confirmed dead, another 9,000 missing and feared dead, 3 million people homeless or displaced. The hurricane destroyed schools, hospitals, farms, utilities, roads, and bridges.

The governments and people of the region have made tremendous efforts to address this crisis, showing great courage and strength. But they are not, and they never will be, alone. I say to the leaders here and to the people of Central America, the United States will continue to do everything we can. *Ayudaremos a nuestros hermanos*. We will help our brothers and sisters. It is the right thing to do. And I say to my fellow Americans, it also serves our long-term interests in a stable, free, and prosperous hemisphere.

I'm very pleased that we have achieved an era of growing cooperation, respect, and friendship among the nations of the Americas. We stand together for democracy, opportunity, and peace. We stand together in good times and bad. The United States already has committed \$283 million in assistance, and we will provide an additional \$17 million through AID for food assistance.

Thousands of our troops and civilian officials are now in the region supporting relief efforts. With our help and with the help of others, the people of Central America have reopened roads, contained disease, restored drinking water in many areas. Both the First Lady and Tipper Gore have visited the region, and last month, they led a conference of charitable organizations to coordinate aid.

Now we are shifting our focus to reconstruction. And the United States will do our share there as well. Working with Congress on a bipartisan basis, our effort will include funds for rebuilding, debt relief and new financing, trade and investment initiatives, and immigration relief.

Already, the United States has identified \$125 million in additional funds for rebuilding. Right now, Senator Domenici, Housing Secretary Cuomo, and other American officials are in the region discussing reconstruction. With Congress and with other countries, we will provide funds to restore hope and growth.

Debt relief and new financing are essential to recovery. We and other creditor nations will relieve Honduras and Nicaragua, the hardest hit nations, from debt service obligations until 2001. We are working with international institutions for new financing, and we will work with Congress to help these countries meet their loan obligations. Together, these efforts could provide more than \$1.5 billion in relief and new resources. For the longer term, we will support, and I am pleased other creditor nations have said they will support, substantial forgiveness of bilateral debt. We call on other creditors to join us.

Next week, Brian Atwood and USAID will convene a conference to encourage private sector aid and investment. Our Overseas Private Investment Corporation, under the leadership of George Munoz, is working to spur U.S. business involvement, starting with an initiative to accelerate over \$200 million in new projects for the region. We will continue to support Caribbean Basin enhancement legislation to make trade more free and more fair, and to help Central American nations restore their economies. I hope very much that it will pass in this coming Congress and quickly. We also plan to submit to the Senate our investment treaties with Nicaragua and Honduras.

Let me add that, after the hurricane struck, our immigration service stopped deportations to Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala through early next year. We are considering further immigration measures, temporary and long-term, which will be announced shortly.

Finally, I want to say that the leaders have kindly invited me to visit their region, and I intend to travel to Central America early next year to consider how the United States can best help them and strengthen our partnership over the long run. I thank them for the invitation. It will be a chance to discuss

moving beyond disaster recovery, to advance our shared agenda for the Americas: deepening democracy and good governance; improving education, health and the environment; expanding opportunity and trade.

I want to thank people all across the United States who have responded to this tragedy with generosity and hard work. And I want to thank these Central American leaders for their leadership and their friendship.

Now, I'd like to turn the podium over to President Flores, who will speak on behalf of the Central American leaders. Mr. President, the podium is yours.

**President Flores.** Mr. President, on behalf of the Presidents of Central America, I wish to express how very pleased we are with today's most fruitful and productive dialog with the President of the United States of America. That reaffirms our confidence in his strong leadership and superb ability to understand our people, both simply as human beings and in terms of their needs for the enormous task of rebuilding our devastated lands.

We also want to convey to the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, to Mrs. Tipper Gore, and the distinguished members of their delegations who made personal visits to our anguished communities following the tragic days of Hurricane Mitch, and to the very generous American people the deepest gratitude of Central America for the prompt and meaningful cooperation the United States provided during our emergency, and in subsequent endeavors of relief and rehabilitation.

First, let us say that we come to Washington completely aware the potential and responsibility for rebuilding the Central American region lies in our own efforts. Inasmuch as we do appreciate and are grateful for the generous support that we have and are sure to receive from the United States and the international community, we also feel that it will not replace our own initiatives but will provide much needed momentum.

The main concerns of our conversation with the President of the United States touched on the following issues: First, the leadership we expect and which we feel that the United States is exercising among the

international community for the procurement of the financial resources that are needed in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction of our devastated economies.

We have explained to President Clinton, and we surely think that he is convinced, that in order for Central America to rebuild, it is crucial that not only debt relief be granted but, more important, that new financial resources and concessionary credits are available in the magnitude that permits that we shall not reverse what we have so heartily fought for and accomplished in terms of economic growth, our political and institutional stability, peace, and a dignified life for our people.

Second, we touched on the negative effects that may result in the aftermath of this tragedy, where tens of thousands of people uprooted from their lands and their jobs, with no homes and no economic security for themselves and their families, if left with no hope or possibility of rapidly procuring their own means of a decent life in their own homeland. We do not wish to see repeated the unfortunate exodus that occurred in Central America in the past when the cruel consequences of war and internal political problems robbed thousands of the security of their jobs and opportunities in their own countries.

For us, a rapid means of providing back to our people the possibilities which have been taken by the devastating effects of this hurricane, which, by the way, are much more graver than those inferred in the worst times of the Central American War, is by strengthening trade, open markets, and commerce opportunities. The enhancement of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which originated as a bipartisan endeavor some years ago, would greatly increase these possibilities.

Third, we spoke about our profound concern, specially at this point where thousands have been left homeless and without jobs, that there be not only temporary measures but a definite solution to the immigration status of the many Central Americans now living and working in the United States.

We Central Americans have paid a very high price for upholding the principles of democracy and for insisting that our people live in freedom. We have made a commitment

to ourselves and to the world to continue strengthening peace at home and to continue playing an important role in the stability and the security of the hemisphere, with a strength that surely comes from the most admirable determination of our people not to let themselves be defeated. We are committed to hard work and superior attitudes, so that this blow which we have had to endure is not a terminal one but a starting point for a more promising future for Central America.

Your hospitality, Mr. President, honors us and engages our commitments. We will be eagerly awaiting your visit to our Central American countries. We pray that God will continue to bless us all. And for you, Mr. President, on behalf of our people and our governments, we wish you the greatest success and strength as you lead your great and admirable country.

Thank you so much.

**The President.** Thank you so much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Miguel Rodriguez of Costa Rica; President Carlos Roberto Flores of Honduras; President Arnaldo Aleman of Nicaragua; President Armando Calderon Sol of El Salvador; and Vice President Luis Flores and President Alvaro Arzu of Guatemala.

### **Remarks Prior to the House Judiciary Committee Vote on the First Article of Impeachment**

*December 11, 1998*

Good afternoon. As anyone close to me knows, for months I have been grappling with how best to reconcile myself to the American people, to acknowledge my own wrongdoing, and still to maintain my focus on the work of the Presidency.

Others are presenting my defense on the facts, the law, and the Constitution. Nothing I can say now can add to that. What I want the American people to know, what I want the Congress to know, is that I am profoundly sorry for all I have done wrong in words and

deeds. I never should have misled the country, the Congress, my friends, or my family. Quite simply, I gave in to my shame.

I have been condemned by my accusers with harsh words. And while it's hard to hear yourself called deceitful and manipulative, I remember Ben Franklin's admonition that our critics are our friends, for they do show us our faults.

Mere words cannot fully express the profound remorse I feel for what our country is going through and for what members of both parties in Congress are now forced to deal with.

These past months have been a tortuous process of coming to terms with what I did. I understand that accountability demands consequences, and I'm prepared to accept them. Painful though the condemnation of the Congress would be, it would pale in comparison to the consequences of the pain I have caused my family. There is no greater agony.

Like anyone who honestly faces the shame of wrongful conduct, I would give anything to go back and undo what I did. But one of the painful truths I have to live with is the reality that that is simply not possible. An old and dear friend of mine recently sent me the wisdom of a poet, who wrote, "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on. Nor all your piety, nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line. Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

So nothing, not piety, nor tears, nor wit, nor torment, can alter what I have done. I must make my peace with that. I must also be at peace with the fact that the public consequences of my actions are in the hands of the American people and their Representatives in the Congress. Should they determine that my errors of word and deed require their rebuke and censure, I am ready to accept that.

Meanwhile, I will continue to do all I can to reclaim the trust of the American people and to serve them well. We must all return to the work, the vital work, of strengthening our Nation for the new century. Our country has wonderful opportunities and daunting challenges ahead. I intend to seize those opportunities and meet those challenges with

all the energy and ability and strength God has given me.

That is simply all I can do: the work of the American people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. At approximately 4:25 p.m. the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives voted the first article of impeachment.

### **Proclamation 7159—National Children's Memorial Day, 1998**

*December 11, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

There is nothing more devastating to a family than the death of a child. Each year, thousands of America's families face this tragedy, losing their children to illness, injury, or accident. Our whole society experiences this loss as well, for we are all diminished by the death of every one of our young people, whose love, laughter, talents, and achievements bring so much joy to our lives and so much promise to our future.

The holiday season is an especially painful time for parents who have lost a child, so it is fitting that we set aside a special day during this month to acknowledge the grief of these families and to pay tribute to the lives and memories of their children. On National Children's Memorial Day, let us all reach out, whether as individuals or as members of caring communities, to offer bereaved families the compassion, support, and understanding they need to begin the process of healing.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 13, 1998, as National Children's Memorial Day. I call upon the American people to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities in remembrance of the infants, children, teenagers, and young adults who have died and to bring comfort to their families.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 14, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 15.

**Executive Order 13108—Further Amendment to Executive Order 13037, Commission To Study Capital Budgeting**

*December 11, 1998*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to extend the reporting deadline for, and the expiration date of, the Commission to Study Capital Budgeting, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 13037, as amended, is further amended by deleting in section 3 of that order “within 1 year from its first meeting” and inserting in lieu thereof “by February 1, 1999” and by deleting in section 5 of that order “30 days after submitting its report” and inserting in lieu thereof “on September 30, 1999”.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
December 11, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 14, 1998]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 15.

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**Digest of Other  
White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President’s public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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**December 5**

In the morning, the President traveled to Wynne, AR, and he returned to Washington, DC, in the afternoon.

**December 7**

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton hosted a congressional ball on the State Floor at the White House.

The President announced the recess appointment of Timothy F. Geithner as Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs. Mr. Geithner was nominated on October 8. The President intends to resubmit his nomination when the 106th Congress convenes.

The President announced the recess appointment of Edwin M. Truman as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs. Mr. Truman was nominated on October 8. The President intends to resubmit his nomination when the 106th Congress convenes.

The President announced the recess appointment of John D. Hawke, Jr., as Comptroller of the Currency at the Department of the Treasury. Mr. Hawke was nominated on July 11. The President intends to resubmit his nomination when the 106th Congress convenes.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Conference on Social Security on December 8 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel and December 9 at Blair House.

**December 8**

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Nashville, TN, where they attended a memorial service for former Senator Albert Gore, Sr.

In the afternoon, they returned to Washington, DC. Later, the President met with Counsel to the President Charles F.C. Ruff to review Mr. Ruff’s upcoming testimony before the House Judiciary Committee.

The President announced his intention to nominate John T. Spotila to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the National Cancer Advisory Board: Dr. Elmer Huerta; Dr. Susan M. Love; Mayor James McGreevey of Woodbridge Township, NJ; Dr. Arthur Nienhuis; Dr. Larry Norton; and Dr. Amelie Ramirez.

The President announced the 1998 recipients of the Nation's highest science and technology honors. Recipients of the National Medal of Science are: Bruce N. Ames; Don L. Anderson; John N. Bahcall; John W. Cahn; Cathleen S. Morawetz; Janet D. Rowley; Eli Ruckenstein; George M. Whitesides; and William Julius Wilson. Recipients of the National Medal of Technology are: Denton A. Cooley, M.D.; team award jointly to Kenneth L. Thompson and Dennis M. Ritchie (Lucent Technologies' Bell Laboratories); team award jointly to Robert T. Fraley, Robert B. Horsch, Ernest G. Jaworski, and Stephen G. Rogers (Monsanto); Biogen, Inc.; and Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.

The White House announced that the President has invited President Carlos Menem of Argentina for a state visit on January 11, 1999.

#### **December 9**

In the afternoon, the President participated in the White House Conference on Social Security at Blair House.

#### **December 10**

The White House announced that President Jacques Chirac of France has accepted the President's invitation for an official working visit on January 19, 1999.

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### **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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NOTE: The Congress having adjourned *sine die* on October 21, no nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

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### **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

#### **Released December 7**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

#### **Released December 8**

Transcript of remarks by Vice President Al Gore at the funeral of his father, former Senator Albert Gore, Sr.

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger at Stanford University

Statement by the Press Secretary: State Visit of President Menem of Argentina

#### **Released December 9**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the White House Conference on Social Security

#### **Released December 10**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of remarks by Special Counsel to the President Gregory Craig on the impeachment inquiry

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of French President Chirac

Fact sheet: Human Rights Day 1998 and Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award

Fact sheet: U.S. Efforts To Promote Human Rights and Democracy

#### **Released December 11**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart



Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's meeting with Central American leaders

Statement by the Press Secretary on the formation of a private sector host committee for the 50th anniversary of NATO

List of official delegation to the Middle East

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**

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NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.